With 9 Beautiful Photographs in Natural Colours

DECEMBER 1915 PRICE 1/-

The QUIVER



CHRISTMAS NUMBER

YOU CAN'T GO WRONG



IN TAKING

BEECHAM'S PILLS



The
Brush that *really* brushes

made of bristles of such high grade that it would cost three times its price except for the ingenious patented construction which makes each bristle do the work of three.

During the last 15 years the price of bristle has advanced so enormously that every form of inferior substitute has been employed, and brush value has steadily deteriorated. The Mason Pearson Brush is a reversion to the quality of 15 years ago (many brushes of which date are still in daily use). Such quality, at the price, is only rendered possible by clustering the bristles in a resilient rubber cushion in such a way that a minimum number do a maximum amount of work. The stoutest bristle of each cluster projects and forms a massaging bristle which stimulates the skin action of the scalp, while the surrounding bristles sweep and cleanse the hair.

MASON PEARSON
London — England

Beware of wire, whalebone, and dangerous bristle substitutes, and insist on seeing the name Mason Pearson on the brush, which is a guarantee of the finest wild boar bristles obtainable.

The Mason Pearson Brush is sold in carton boxes, as illustrated below, and can be obtained of all high-class chemists, stores, and hairdressers.



Made in two grades.
STANDARD, Price **7/6** EXTRA, Price **10/6**

If any difficulty in obtaining, write to the
MASON PEARSON SELLING AGENCY, Ltd.
61, New Oxford Street, London, W.C.



YOU CAN SIT AT THE PIANO and Play tunes TO-DAY

by

Naunton's National Music System

This is not the impossible task which some people would have you believe. With Naunton's music to guide you, the piano is the easiest instrument in the world to play, for there is no drudgery, no practising tiresome exercises, no scales, sharps, flats or accidentals, no unexpected or unnecessary difficulty whatever.

Naunton's National Music System is not a mechanical device nor a vamping method, but a **SIMPLE, RAPID & PERFECT System of Musical Notation** which you can learn to read, play and understand almost instantaneously.

You play tunes on your very first lesson.

Over 50,000 people are already playing the piano by it

Playing with taste and skill, charming other people, delighting themselves, getting more and more enjoyment out of life every day, and all because they ventured to try Naunton's National Music System. They proved for themselves that what we claim to be true is true, and the opportunity is now offered to you also.

What others have done quickly and well, you also can do with equal speed and ease. Not one of the 50,000 people just mentioned had a better offer given to him or her than that which is given to you now. Read carefully through the coupon at the foot of this page and see the promise contained in it. If you then have a desire to play the piano perfectly, send your **1/-** with the coupon to-day, and in return we will send you our **"Special No. 1,"** containing five tunes, which we guarantee you can play. Thus you can judge for yourself the simplicity of our system and the accuracy of our statements. This small outlay will open up the delights of the vast realm of music to **you** just as it has done for the 50,000 and more people who are already playing by it. Never in all your life will you have spent a shilling to better purpose.

We say for ourselves only what our pupils are more than willing to say for us. Just read their

CLEAR TESTIMONY TO THE IMMENSE VALUE OF OUR WONDERFUL SYSTEM

This from a Pupil who has taken nine lessons out of the fifty which comprise the whole System: "I had tried to learn under many masters for about nine years, but at last had to give it up. I can read and play by your system easily."

This from a Pupil who has taken only six lessons: "I can play well, and am teaching two of my friends."

From a Musician who has composed over 3,000 popular songs: "I consider it the most ingenious invention in connection with music I have ever seen."

From a Proud Mother: "Florrie can play splendidly, and I can play also. Your system is certainly splendid, and is just as easy as you said."

From a Composer: "I think it A1, easy, excellent. Any person could understand it."

From many Pupils whose testimony can all be rolled into one: "When reading your advertisement I could scarcely believe that any system could achieve what was there stated. But on studying your first lesson I realised that at last a system had been discovered which would help persons who formerly held the idea that to play the piano was utterly beyond them. Naunton's National Music System is splendid. It is the acme of simplicity, and is as perfect as it is simple."

From a Pupil who thinks that one good turn deserves another: "I am recommending it to all my friends, and two of them are sending to you for their lessons."

THE ORIGINALS OF THE ABOVE AND THOUSANDS OF SIMILAR TESTIMONIALS CAN BE SEEN AT OUR LONDON OFFICES AT ANY TIME.

SPECIAL TRIAL OFFER COUPON.

To THE MANAGER, NAUNTON'S NATIONAL MUSIC SYSTEM, MEMORIAL HALL, FARRINGDON ST., LONDON, E.C.

Being a reader of THE QUIVER, and desiring to test your system, I send herewith postal order for **One Shilling**, in return for which please send me your **"Special No. 1,"** published at **2/-**, containing five tunes, with your instructions how I can play at the first sitting, also particulars of how I can become a THOROUGH musician by your Course of instruction.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

DATE .....



The Universal Watch

and the ideal present for Christmas.

Ingersoll

5/- Watch

The Watch that is making the whole world punctual.

A GOOD Watch, a dependable Watch, is always an acceptable gift. It is companionable, serviceable, helpful, and a constant reminder of the giver and the regard which prompted the gift. It would be difficult to think of any other gift so useful and so fitted to the present exceptional times than a guaranteed Ingersoll. The expensive Watch is out of place in War-time so long as you can obtain an Ingersoll which offers the same accuracy at a fraction of the cost, and is, in addition, far stronger.

There is an Ingersoll to suit the needs and pocket of every member of the family. The series includes:—

Crown 5/, Triumph 6/6, Eclipse 10/-,
Motor 10/6, Junior 12/6, Wrist 13/6



Over 15,000 British Shopkeepers have Ingersolls for sale, but if your dealer cannot supply, send P.O. direct for the Watch desired, and we will send same post free by return.

The name is on the dial of every genuine Ingersoll Watch—look for it before buying.

ROBT. H. INGERSOLL & BRO.,
410 Audrey House, Ely Place, London, E.C.

NO MORE GREY HAIR

10,000 Home Grey Hair Treatments Free to the Public

WONDERFUL TREATMENT RESTORES NATURAL COLOUR WITHOUT DYES

NO more grey hair! No more fading, whitening hairs to steal away the charm of youth. No more humiliating, expensive and troublesome dyes and hair stains.

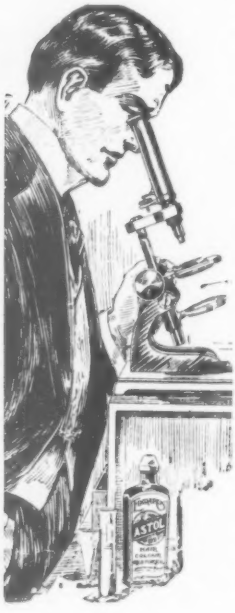
For an amazing new scientific preparation, "Astol," has been discovered that quickly and permanently overcomes greyness and restores in full beauty and lustre all the original natural hair colour that gives so great a distinction and "vitality" to the face and expression.

The discoverer—Mr. Edwards, the inventor of the world-famous "Harlene" Hair-Drill—has decided to give ten thousand supplies of this wonderful discovery free to the public.

TEST IT AT HOME FREE.

This means that every grey-haired man or woman who reads this announcement is entitled to receive a home-test "Astol" treatment without cost or obligation whatever by simply using the coupon printed below.

It makes no difference whether your grey hairs are due to Worry, Shock, Hair Debility, Illness, Approaching Age, Overwork, or any other cause; no matter if you are partially or entirely grey or white haired, you can accept this wonderful free "Astol" gift with just the same perfect confidence of success.



POST THE COUPON BELOW.

Fill in your name and address on the form below. Send it in to Mr. Edwards, with 2d. stamps for postage, and by *return of post* you will receive:—

1. A free bottle of "Astol"—the discovery that penetrates directly to the colouring cells of the hair and by reviving the full natural hair colour from root to tip, makes you look years and years younger.

2. A free copy of Mr. Edwards' book, "Good News for the Grey-Haired," explaining all about "Astol" and how simply and conveniently you can effect your hair rejuvenation.



Until you have tested "Astol" you cannot realise how simple it is to recover lost hair colour. Why not test it free?

"Astol" is just the one *natural* scientific preparation that will restore the whole head of hair to its natural beauty in the shortest possible time.

Of course, once you have seen for yourself by means of this free test just how truly wonderful is the "Astol" method you can always obtain larger supplies of "Astol" from your chemist at 2s. 9d. and 4s. 6d. per bottle, or post free on remittance from the Edwards' Harlene Co., 20 26 Lamb's Conduit Street, London, W.C. Postage extra on foreign order. Cheques and P.O.'s should be crossed.

FREE TO THE GREY-HAIRED

To the Edwards' Harlene Co.,
20-26 Lamb's Conduit Street,
London, W.C.

Dear Sirs,—Please send me a free trial supply of "Astol," and full directions. I enclose 2d. stamps for postage to any part of the world. (Foreign stamps accepted.)

Name.....

Address.....

.....

The Quiver, Dec., 1915.

I cannot do better than send

Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen



Buy one for Soldier or Sailor.

One for Friend or Relative.

One for YOURSELF.

See the

NEW LEVER POCKET SELF FILLER

CHOOSE the type that is best likely to meet the writer's requirements. Any nib can be accurately matched, and if not just right it will be exchanged without extra charge by any Stationer. This is a great convenience for any recipient of a Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen, the ever welcome Xmas gift. The new Lever Pocket Self-Filler is tremendously popular. With all the outstanding qualities of Waterman's Ideals, it has an ingenious lever self-filling arrangement. Just lift the lever, dip the nib in ink, lower lever, and the pen is filled. That's all. The lever fits flush with the barrel.

THREE TYPES: For the Regular Type, Waterman's Ideal, **10/6** and upwards.

For the Safety and the New Lever Pocket Self-Filling Types, **12/6** and upwards.

Of Stationers and Jewellers. Booklet Free.

L. G. Sloan, The Pen Corner, Kingsway, London.



Send him one for Christmas

Your soldier friend or relative will be glad to own and wear a Waltham Wristlet Watch.

You certainly can't give him a more practical or useful gift for Xmas. Thousands are being worn by our men in the new armies.

Strong, neat, durable, and thoroughly trustworthy, like all Waltham Watches. Just the watch a soldier needs. Send him one for Xmas.

Equally suitable for civilian wear. See the exquisitely dainty series for Ladies.

Waltham Watches

SILVER WRISTLET WALTHAMS.

FOR GENTLEMEN.

	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
Maximus	11 15 6	No. 165 ...	4 10 3
Riverside	9 0 0	No. 161 ...	3 9 9
Lady Waltham	6 9 3	No. 160 ...	3 3 0

FOR LADIES.

	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
Maximus	11 11 3	Ruby	7 6 3
Riverside	9 6 0	Sapphire	5 13 9

Also in Gold and Rolled Gold Cases. Luminous Dials extra.

FREE—**Watch Booklet and Wristlet Watch Pamphlet from**

THE WALTHAM WATCH CO.
(Dept. 90),
125 HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON, W.C.
(Established over 60 Years.)

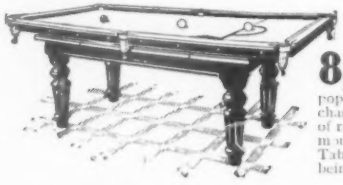
Nothing like Billiards

Try Free—and pay as you play

BILLIARDS is a real "live" game that makes the hours skim—keeps the young people at home, and prevents that boredom that comes in the long winter evenings, when outside attractions seem so glamorous to impressionable minds.

Install a Riley Miniature Billiard Table and watch how it binds the family circle—gives an interest to the dark hours, for not only the boys and girls, but the old folks too.

And even the expert player enjoys a game on the perfectly-proportioned and delicately-adjusted Riley Home Billiard Tables—exact miniature replicas of the famous full-size Riley models on which the great championship matches are played.



Riley's Miniature Billiard Tables.

To rest securely on any dining table. Solid mahogany French-polished, with best slate bed, low frost-proof cushions, ivory or crystalate balls, and all accessories included.

Riley's no-trouble way to pay.

8/6 Send 8/6 postal order to us this evening, and within two or three days the 5-guinea size **Riley Miniature Table** (the most popular size) will be dispatched, carriage paid (no charge for packages), to any address within a mile of railway station. The remainder you pay in twelve monthly instalments of 8/6. Any other price of Table in 13 equal monthly payments, 5 per cent. being added to cash price.

Cash prices are as follow:—

Size 4 ft. 4 in. by 2 ft. 4 in.	£3 7 6	*Or in 13 monthly payments 5% being added to cash prices*	5/6
" 5 ft. 4 in. by 2 ft. 10 in.	£4 7 6		7/-
" 6 ft. 4 in. by 3 ft. 4 in.	£5 5 0		8/6
" 7 ft. 4 in. by 3 ft. 10 in.	£7 5 0		11/6
" 8 ft. 4 in. by 4 ft. 4 in.	£10 0 0		16/-

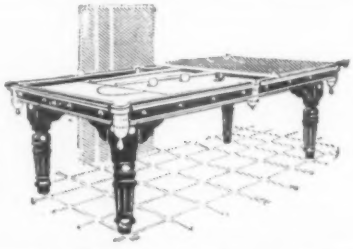
Riley's "Combine" Billiard-and-Dining Table.

Handsome as a dining table and perfect as a Billiard Table. Solid mahogany; low frost-proof rubber cushions; best slate bed; patent automatic raising and lowering action. Dining table top of highly polished mahogany.

Cash prices are as follow:—

Size 5 ft. 4 in. by 2 ft. 10 in. ..	£13 10 0
" 6 ft. 4 in. by 3 ft. 4 in. ..	£18 0 0
" 7 ft. 4 in. by 3 ft. 10 in. ..	£18 10 0
" 8 ft. 4 in. by 4 ft. 4 in. ..	£24 10 "
" 9 ft. 4 in. by 4 ft. 10 in. ..	£32 0 0

Or in 13 monthly payments, plus 5 per cent. on above cash prices.



FREE.—On receipt of post card full detailed Illustrated Catalogue of Billiard and Dining Tables and small or full-sized Tables and Sundries.

TRY FREE—for Seven Days

Couldn't be a better guarantee of satisfaction than Riley's promise to accept the Table back if after seven days' trial you are dissatisfied. Send first instalment at once and make this test quite free.

E. J. RILEY, Ltd., Brandon Works, ACCRINGTON.

London Showrooms—147 Aldersgate Street, E.C.



On Soldiers Ink



TABLET FORM

MANY soldiers on active service are using "SWAN" Fountpens. People who want to send a "SWAN" Pen to some friend at the front wonder how soldiers carry ink reserves. This illustration will explain.

A METAL TUBE of "SWAN" Ink Tablets costing 6d. contains about 40 tablets. Each tablet is equal to a penful of ink. A penful of ink will write about a dozen average letters. A tube contains enough ink for easily 400 letters. A shilling tube holds about three times the 6d.

ALL the soldier has to do is to fill his pen from his water bottle and drop a tablet in. The tablet dissolves quickly and makes perfect writing ink. Simple as A B C.



"SWAN"

SERVICE WRITING OUTFIT

2.C. "SWAN" Safety Pen, 12/6 (other "Swan" Pens from 10/6 up)
"SWAN" Metal Pocket - - 1/- (for protecting the pen when not in use)
"SWAN" Ink Tablets - - - 6d. (40 in the Tube)

Price of Complete Outfit Post Free,

14/-

SEND your soldier or sailor friend this splendid writing outfit. It will both remind and enable him to write you frequently.



CATALOGUE FREE ON REQUEST.

MABIE, TODD & CO., Ltd.: 79-80 High Holborn, W.C.;
204 Regent Street, W.; 95a Regent Street, W.; 38 Cheapside, E.C.
Factory: 319-329 Weston Street, London, S.E.

"The Hosiery Brand and its Value." No. 1.

Immense quantities of adulterated Wool — mostly for Unbranded Hosiery—

Are at present on the British market. The price of Wool has increased, with its scarcity and the difficulty of obtaining it. Manufacturers of Unbranded and Inferior Hosiery are using cheap shoddy material.

But the world's finest Brand of Stockings and Socks—"Jason"—are still guaranteed All Wool.

"Jason"
ALL WOOL UNSHRINKABLE

Quality Stockings and Socks for Ladies, Children and Men

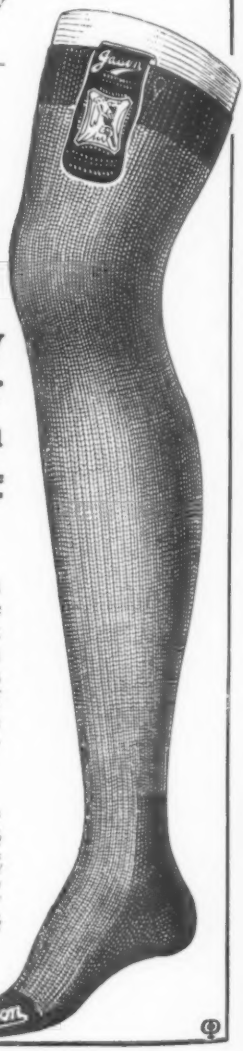
Have a world-wide reputation, for your protection.

"Jason" are recognisable by the Jason Tab on every pair. That Brand is the link between the manufacturer and you — the distinctive mark which puts beyond possibility any adulteration or deterioration; for the Jason Tab represents years of goodwill — it betokens generations of craftsmanship, and a deal of experience in the production of the finest, silkiest, most perfectly woven Stockings and Socks you ever wore.

"Medea"— the new All-British Stockings and Socks

These high-grade goods are made by the manufacturers of "Jason" to compete in every respect with those hitherto sold of foreign make. "Medea" is the name given to those lines which are other than wool—fine, good-wearing quality, made of the best grades of mercerised lisle or mixture.

The Illustration shows a popular black Jason style, with artificial silk leg and suspender top. See the Jason Tab on every pair. Sold by Drapers and Outfitters everywhere, in very many new styles, plain and fancy, for Ladies, Children, and Men.



JASON HOSIERY CO., LEICESTER.

The Onoto needs no filler!



Why didn't you ask her to send you an Onoto?

A filler is bound to get broken at the Front. The Onoto needs no filler; it fills itself from any ink supply, and cleans the nib while filling.

The Onoto never leaks in any position. You send it out to your friend at the Front full of ink ready for immediate use.

The Military-size Onoto Pen is just the right size for a soldier's pocket.

Onoto
THE Pen
from 10/6 each.

The Right Christmas Present for the Front—and at Home.

THOMAS DE LA RUE & CO., LTD.

Making Provision for Old Age

LONG before reaching the heyday of her career the wise woman begins making provision for the time when age or inclination shall counsel retirement.

This is the plan adopted by a good many, to make sure of an income for their later years. They deposit a certain sum—which they can well spare from their salary—each year with the Sun Life of Canada. At fifty years of age, or fifty-five, or sixty, as may be agreed upon, the Sun Life of Canada will commence paying the depositor an annuity which will be guaranteed for life.

Under this arrangement a woman twenty-four years of age can obtain a sure income of £50 a year, commencing at the age of fifty-five, simply by depositing the small sum of £10 8s. 6d. per annum until reaching that age. If the pension is not to start until sixty is reached, the deposits need only be £6 12s. per annum.

Of course, it will be understood that this pension plan can be adopted at almost any age, to mature at any age, and for any amount. Full particulars may be obtained from the Manager of the Sun Life of Canada, the leading Company for annuities.

Investing a Legacy

The money can best be used by purchasing a deferred annuity (to commence at fifty-five or sixty years of age), or, if the recipient be getting on in life, by purchasing an annuity to commence immediately.

Full particulars can be obtained by writing and stating age and requirements to J. F. Junkin (Manager), Sun Life of Canada, 100 Canada House, Norfolk Street, London, W.C.

NOTE.—The assets of the Sun Life of Canada are over £14,000,000, under the direct supervision of the Canadian Government.

SULPHOLINE

THE FAMOUS LOTION

Quickly removes SKIN ERUPTIONS, ensuring A CLEAR COMPLEXION.

The slightest Rash, faintest Spot, irritable Pimples, disfiguring Blotches, obstinate Eczema disappear by applying

SULPHOLINE

which renders the skin spotless, soft, clear, supple, comfortable.

Bottles 1/3 and 3/-

FOR 42 YEARS

SULPHOLINE

HAS BEEN THE REMEDY FOR

Eruptions	Roughness	Acne
Pimples	Rashes	Blotches
Redness	Eczema	Spots
Psoriasis	Scurf	Rosea

Sulpholine is prepared by the great Skin Specialist, J. PEPPER & CO., LTD., 12 Bedford Laboratories, London, S.E., and can be obtained direct from them by post or from any chemists and stores throughout the world.

Quickly removes the effects of Sunscorch.

THETFORD BULB BOWLS.



"A" Pattern



"C" Pattern

For growing Hyacinths, Tulips, Narcissi, Daffodils, Crocuses, Snowdrops, etc., Indoors, in Fibre, without drainage.

UNBREAKABLE, LIGHT, ARTISTIC, & DURABLE

Finished in Light or Dark Green.

"A" Pattern.					
Inches diameter	6	7½	9	11	
Each (Post Free)	**9d.**	**1/3**	**1/6**	**2/**	
"C" Pattern with Crinkled Edges. Inches diameter	...	...	10	12	
Each (Post Free)	...	...	**1/10**	**2/**	

May be obtained through the principal Stores, Seedsmen, etc., or send P.O. to the

PATENT PULP MANUFACTURING CO., LTD.,
(Dept. C) **38 York Road London, N.**

100 PIECES PURE WHITE CHINA, 25/-

Includes a complete Dinner Service for twelve, a complete Tea-Breakfast Service for twelve, Hot Water Jug, Teapot, and a set of three Jugs. All to match, pure white, each piece thin and dainty, beautifully finished, and fit for any table.

Packed Free, Guaranteed Delivered Perfect, 25/- the Lot.

Money back if not delighted. Why not have your china bright and fresh from our kilns, and at half the price you usually pay? Our catalogue, showing in colours a really nice selection, with testimonials from all parts of the world, will be sent to you Post Free.

Write for it now!

VINCENT FINE ART POTTERY, D, MOORLAND WORKS, BURSLEM, ENG.



A Genuine Rupture Cure Sent on Trial to Prove It.

Don't Wear a Truss Any Longer.

After Thirty Years' Experience We Have Produced an Appliance for Men, Women, and Children That Actually Cures Rupture.

If you have tried almost everything else, come to us. Where others fail is where we have our greatest success. Send attached coupon to-day, and we will send you free our illustrated book on Rupture and its cure, showing the Appliance, and giving you prices and names of many people who have tried it and are extremely grateful. It is instant relief when all others fail. Remember we use no salves, no harness, no lies.

We send on trial to prove what we say is true. You are the judge, and once having seen our illustrated book and read it, you will be as enthusiastic as hundreds of patients whose letters you can also read. Fill in the free coupon below and post to-day. It is well worth your time, whether you try our Appliance or not.



From a photograph of Mr. C. E. Brooks, inventor of the Appliance, who cured himself and who's experience has since benefited thousands. If ruptured write to-day.

TEN REASONS WHY

You Should Send for the Brooks Rupture Appliance.

1. It is absolutely the only Appliance of the kind on the market to-day, and in it are embodied the principles that inventors have sought after for years.

2. The Appliance for retaining the rupture cannot be thrown out of position.

3. Being an air-cushion of soft rubber, it clings closely to the body, yet never blisters or causes irritation.

4. Unlike the ordinary so-called pads used in common trusses, it is not cumbersome or ungainly.

5. It is small, soft, and pliable, and positively cannot be detected through the clothing.

6. The soft, pliable bands holding the Appliance do not give one the unpleasant sensation of wearing a harness.

7. There is nothing about it to get foul, and when it becomes soiled it can be washed without injuring it in the least.

8. There are no metal springs in the Appliance to torture one by cutting and bruising the flesh.

9. All the material of which the Appliances are made is of the very best that money can buy, making it a durable and safe Appliance to wear.

10. Our reputation for honesty and fair dealing is so thoroughly established by an experience of over thirty years of dealing with the public, and the prices are so reasonable, the terms so fair, that there certainly should be no hesitancy in sending the free coupon to-day

Trusses Were No Earthly Use.

High Street, Seal, near Sevenoaks, Kent.

I should like to say that I find great comfort in wearing your Appliance. I never thought I should have been able to take up my occupation as blacksmith again. Trusses were no earthly use to me, and caused me great pain, but now I can go to my work with ease, and feel quite safe. I shall always take great pleasure in recommending your wonderful Appliance to those I come in contact with suffering from hernia.

THOS. COLLISON.

Perfectly Cured at 74.

To Mr. Brooks. Jubilee Home, Chalfont St. Giles, Bucks.

Dear Sir,—I, Henry Salter, have much pleasure in saying that I am perfectly satisfied with the Rupture Appliance. You are welcome to use my name where the British flag flies, and all other nations on the face of the globe. Dear sir, I cannot thank you enough for relieving my suffering. I shall recommend you to any of my friends. I am pleased to say it is a permanent cure.

I remain, yours obediently,

HENRY SALTER.

P.S.—My age is 74 years, perfectly cured.

A Cheap and Infallible Remedy.

C. E. Brooks, 69 Oxford Road, Macclesfield.

Dear Sir,—After a year's wearing of your famous Rupture Appliance, I can find no words to express my admiration of such an excellent invention and the benefit I have derived from its use. All you claim for it in your book, and all that your clients have said in its favour in their printed testimonials, I can fully bear out and confirm from personal experience. I am sure that hundreds of your Appliances would be instantly ordered if the unfortunate sufferers only knew of its existence. For my part I feel that you deserve the universal gratitude of mankind for inventing such a cheap and infallible remedy for so widespread a complaint, and you are perfectly free to make what use you please of what I say in this letter.

Yours faithfully, ELLEN JARRETT.

Worth a Thousand Trusses.

Chesham, Bucks.

I am very pleased with the Appliance which I purchased at your office some time ago. I must say it is worth a thousand trusses, and shall be very pleased to recommend it to anyone whenever the opportunity occurs.

J. H.

8 Weeks Old Baby Perfectly Cured.

27 New Street, Lutshill, Staffs.

I now take great pleasure in thanking you for the Appliance, as it has been a perfect cure for my little boy. He was only eight weeks old when I tried the Appliance, and is now perfectly cured at six months. I shall certainly recommend your Appliance as being a perfect cure. Thanking you greatly for what you have done for me.

MRS. SMITH.

Remember.

We send the Appliance on trial to prove that what we say is true. You are to be the judge.

Fill in the free coupon below and post to-day, or write us asking for particulars.

If in London, call at our consulting rooms. Experienced and capable fitters for ladies and gentlemen.

FREE INFORMATION COUPON.

BROOKS APPLIANCE CO., 642 BANK BUILDINGS, KINGSWAY (Corner of Portugal Street), LONDON, W.C.

Please send me by post, in plain wrapper, illustrated book and full information about The Brooks Appliance for the cure of rupture.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

(Please write plainly.)

CRIMPOLINE HAIR-CURLING FLUID



Beautiful natural curls or waves produced in a few days without the aid of tongs or pins. Crimpoline will make your hair soft and silky and keep it curly in roughest weather. It is neither greasy nor sticky. When once the hair curls with Crimpoline it always remains curly or wavy with very little attention. Crimpoline cleanses and restores faded or dull hair, and always keeps it fresh and young. It has also the advantage of being a splendid hairdressing. Results will surprise you.

1/9 and **2/6** a bottle, postage 3d. extra.

PERALIA

BEAUTIFIES THE COMPLEXION INSTANTLY

There is no waiting. First application shows a wonderful improvement to the most troublesome complexion. Further applications enhance your beauty still more. The more you use Peralia the more beautiful you become.

If you are already beautiful Peralia will intensify your beauty; moreover, existing beauty is always retained if Peralia is used occasionally. Peralia has wonderful powers, removes Redness, Greasiness, Roughness, Sallowness, Tan, Freckles, etc. Restores youthful beauty lost through age, illness, or worry. Imparts to faded cheeks a youthful bloom and freshness. Makes the hands and arms soft and white. **1/-** and **2/6** a bottle, postage 3d. If your Chemist or Drug Store is out of stock send direct to us; take no substitutes!

PERALIA PERFUMERY CO. (Dept. E.), NORTH SHIELDS, ENGLAND.



A Sure-to-please Xmas Gift

Everyone likes LUCE'S JERSEY EAU DE-COLOGNE. Its delightfully refreshing fragrance wins appreciation from all.

First made in Jersey in 1837. Awarded numerous Gold Medals and Highest Awards in competition with leading British and Continental Makers.

Prices, 1/3, 2/6, 5/-, 10/-,
Wickers, 3/6, 7/-, 13/6.

Famous since the early days of Queen Victoria.

Of all Stores, Chemists and Perfumers; or from Luce's High Street, Southampton.

LUCE'S ORIGINAL *Jersey* Eau-de-Cologne

British & Best

Beware of imitation Jersey Brands. Insist on having Luce's.

JERSEY, SOUTHAMPTON and LONDON.



The Tiresome Tuck Has got the blight; For munitions work He's no Fluxite.

For manufacturing Munitions of War

FLUXITE

is used extensively. In all parts of the world and for all kinds of Soldering Work, Fluxite is known as the paste flux that

SIMPLIFIES SOLDERING

BOTH Amateurs and Mechanics WILL have Fluxite.

Of all Ironmongers, in **6d.**, **1/-**, and **2/-** tins.

The "FLUXITE" SOLDERING SET contains a special "small-space" Soldering Iron, a Pocket Blow-Lamp, Fluxite, Solder, etc.

Price **4/6**; Sample Set post paid U.K. **4/10**

Auto-Controller Co., 226 Vienna Road, Bermondsey, England.

"Nerves" & Palpitation

Bed-ridden for two years, yet cured by Dr. Cassell's Tablets



Mrs. Best, Somerset

"It is like living in a new world to me since I took Dr. Cassell's Tablets. I think they are the most wonderful medicine ever known."

That is the exclamation of Mrs. Frank Best, of Chiselborough, Stoke-under-Ham, Somerset. The words were spoken by her recently in the course of an interview, and they show her sincere gratitude for the cure effected in her by Dr. Cassell's Tablets. She continued: "It was an attack of influenza that brought on all my trouble. After that I used to suffer frightfully with my heart and general weakness, and I became a martyr to the most torturing headaches. I was so weak that I positively could not drag about, but just lay on a couch and suffered. Sometimes I was taken out in a bathchair. But I was getting worse instead of better all the time, and at last I had to keep to bed. There I lay for two whole years, suffering dreadfully, in spite of all the medicine I had. My heart palpitated so violently that I could not sit up in bed for it sometimes, and the pain in my head was simply agonising. It never ceased. I had severe indigestion, too, with pains at my stomach after everything I had. Tea, in particular, caused me awful pain. I was all pain, never free from pain, and I ate so little that I wasted away till I was just a shadow of what I had been. I was extremely nervous, too, and so weak that I could not get up even to have my bed made.

"However, when all else had failed I got Dr. Cassell's Tablets, and then came improvement. They built up new health for me wonderfully, and soon I was up and about again, getting stronger every day. At the present time I am in the best of health."

Writing a year later, Mrs. Best says: "I am keeping just as well as I was when first cured by Dr. Cassell's Tablets."

Dr. Cassell's Tablets.

SEND FOR A FREE BOX.

Send your name and address and two penny stamps for postage, etc., to Dr. Cassell's Co., Ltd. (Box AT61), Chester Road, Manchester, and you will receive a trial box free.

Dr. Cassell's Tablets are Nutritive, Restorative, Alterative, Anti-Spasmodic, and of great Therapeutic value in all derangements of the Nerve and Functional Systems in old or young. They are the recognised modern home remedy for—

Nervous Breakdown	**Neurasthenia**	**Kidney Disease**	**Wasting Diseases**
Nerve Paralysis	**Nervous Debility**	**Indigestion**	**Palpitation**
Spinal Paralysis	**Sleeplessness**	**Stomach Disorder**	**Loss of Flesh**
Infantile Paralysis	**Anæmia**	**Mal-nutrition**	**Premature Decay**

Specially valuable for nursing mothers and the critical periods of life.

Sold by Chemists and Stores in all parts of the world, including leading Chemists in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Africa, and India.

Prices: **1/-**, **1/3**, and **3/-**—the **3/-** size being the most economical.



Supremacy!

Like the British Army, the "Clemak" has firmly established its ascendancy. It may be outnumbered, it cannot be beaten. It may be attacked by every weapon known to commercial warfare, but still it triumphs. Sheer merit! That's the secret of "Clemak" success.

CLEMAK Safety Razor 5/-

No loose parts to worry about and no adjusting—it's simplicity itself. And so safe you can shave in a dim light—or in the dark if necessary. Cleaned in a moment—Stropped in a minute—and a blade so keen that all the science in the world can't make it keener.

Obtainable from all **Cutlers, Ironmongers, Stores,** &c., or post free from the Clemak Razor Co., 17 Billiter Street, London, E.C.

Sole Australasian Agents—W. PLANT & CO., MARKET STREET, SYDNEY.

5/- *Silver-plated Clemak Razor with stropping handle and* **Seven** *blades.*

Combination Outfit: A Triple Silver plated Razor, **Twelve** *specially selected Blades, Patent Stropping Machine, with velvet hide Strop* **10/6**



'Forever Grateful'

(A Message from a Wounded Soldier.)

"I tried the Hall's Wine as soon as I received it, and the result was a great improvement in my condition.

"I was hit by a piece of shrapnel, "and it penetrated my lungs, causing me "to be constantly in torture. After suffer- "ing like this for four or five weeks it was "a relief to be able to lie down in peace for "even a little while, and I must say that after taking "only one wineglassful I felt made over again. I praise Hall's Wine wherever "I go, and I feel for ever grateful."

(The Name, Number, and Regiment of the writer of the above letter will be given on request.)

You cannot send anything better than Hall's Wine to your sick friend to hasten his recovery.

Hall's Wine

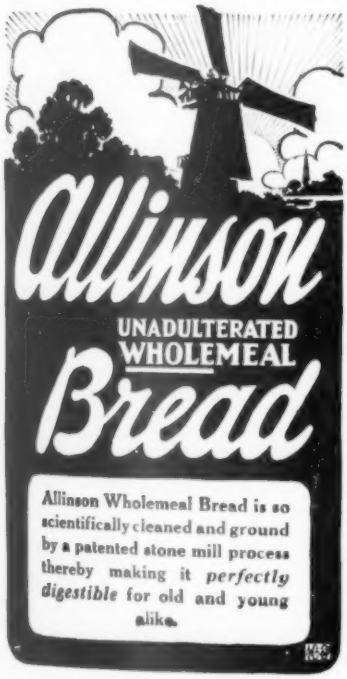
The Supreme Tonic Restorative

A Doctor declares: "It is impossible to take Hall's Wine without being benefited."

GUARANTEE.—Buy a bottle of Hall's Wine to-day. If, after taking half of it, you feel no benefit, return to us the half-empty bottle, and we will at once refund your entire outlay.

Large size bottle, 2/6. Of all Wine Merchants, and Grocers and Chemists with wine licences.

STEPHEN SMITH & CO., LTD., BOW, LONDON. (674)



Allinson Wholemeal Bread is so scientifically cleaned and ground by a patented stone mill process thereby making it *perfectly digestible* for old and young alike.

AT CHRISTMAS

when you have entertained your friends and **enjoyed the good things** of the table yourself, don't forget a tin of

ANDREWS LIVER SALT

FOR THE

NEXT MORNING

Andrews Liver Salt removes foetid and poisonous matter (the groundwork of disease) from the blood by natural means, gently and safely relaxes the bowels, and gives tone to the whole system. It cures indigestion, biliousness, constipation, and dyspepsia.

Put a tin of Andrews in the parcel you are sending to your soldier or sailor friend.

If you cannot procure from your chemist, grocer, or store, please send 3/d. (and name of your dealer) for a full-sized tin. We refund your postage.

SCOTT & TURNER, Ltd.,
St. Andrews Buildings, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Disordered Digestion

The natural cure is special attention to diet thereby allowing the organs to recuperate. The "ALLENBURYS" Diet is the ideal food for dyspeptics, invalids, and those with impaired digestion, nourishing and invigorating the whole system.

MADE IN A MINUTE
add boiling water only.

Send 3d. Stamps for large sample.

Of Chemists
1/6 and 3/-
per Tin.

D.23.

The 'Allenburys' DIET

ALLEN & HANBURYS LTD., LOMBARD STREET, LONDON.

INDIGESTION

PAINS AFTER EATING | **DEPRESSION**
LOSS OF APPETITE | **LANGUOR**



Indigestion is the cause of a vast amount of bodily discomfort and pain, and a very frequent cause of depression and misery. If people would only realise that the most necessary condition of good health, of strength, even of bodily comfort, is a healthy stomach, and that the safe and simple way to keep the stomach, liver and bowels healthily

REMOVED AND PREVENTED BY

active is to take an occasional dose of Mother Seigel's Syrup, then their general physical condition would always be one of fitness and well-being.

No man or woman can be strong, or cheerful, if he or she is subject to frequent attacks of biliousness or headaches, pains after eating, sleeplessness, flatulence, furred tongue, and constipation. But an occasional dose of Mother Seigel's Syrup *will* give you good digestion, *will* help to keep you well and cheerful, and rid you of the fear of indigestion and its evil consequences.

MOTHER
SEIGEL'S SYRUP

Price 1/3 and 2/9 per bottle. In tablet form, 2/9.

MASON'S
Wine Essences

For XMAS. & NEW YEAR
ESPECIALLY:
but suitable for anytime.

THE RIGHT SORT!
SAMPLE IT.



In bottles
6d. 1/- & 2/-

GOOD! IT'S MASON'S

Newball & Mason, Manufacturers, Nottingham.

SEND nine penny stamps to Newball and Mason, Nottingham, and they will send you a bottle of Mason's Ginger Wine Essence, which makes (with the addition of lump Sugar) one Gallon Ginger Wine.

All who apply before February 15th will receive a Neat Money Box, which makes a useful Gift for the Children

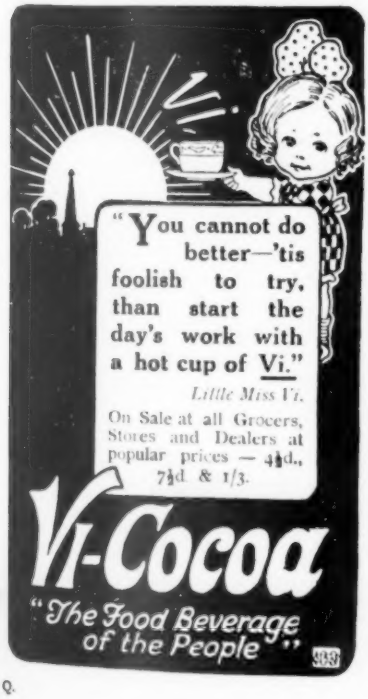
GOOD its Mason's

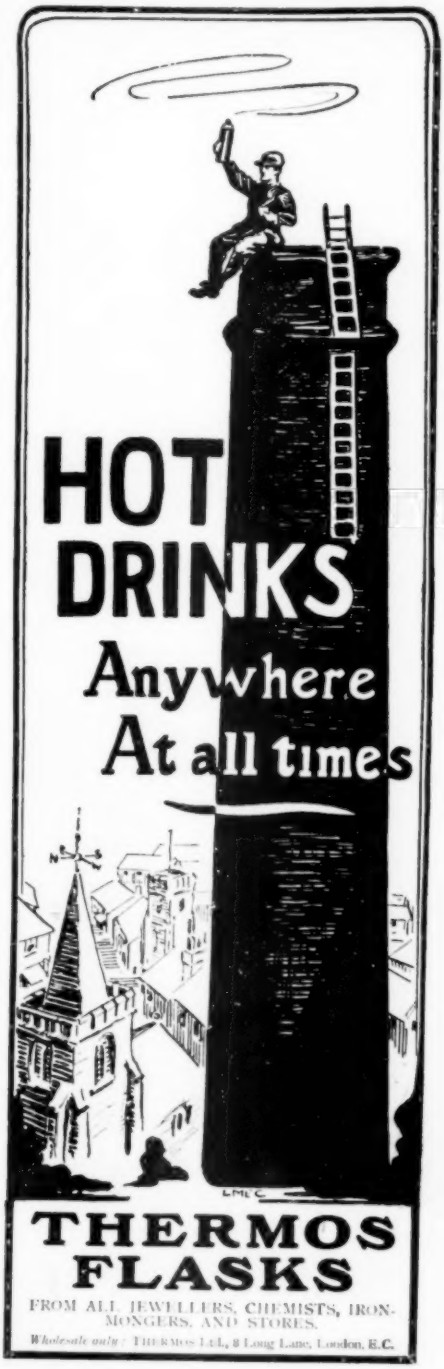
A bottle of Ginger Wine Essence would make an excellent gift for the men at the front.

SEND nine penny stamps to —— Newball & Mason Nottingham, and they will send you a bottle of Mason's Ginger Wine Essence which makes (with the addition of lump Sugar) one Gallon Ginger Wine ——

All who apply before December 31st will receive a Neat Money Box which makes a useful Gift for the Children.

GOOD it's MASON'S





Dare your boy to jump through these!——D. Norwell's made these Brogues for years, and knows just the way to outwit your boy's cleverness at mounting up the leather bill.

The Boy's Brogue

For School or any wear. Splendid wear, and keep their shape to the last stitch.



Sizes—7, 8, 9, 10, **10 6**; 11, 12, 13, 1, **11 6**; 2, 3, 4, 5, **12 6**; 6, 7 (Youths'), **13 6**.

The Girl's "Grampian" Brogue

There are very few better wearing shoes, always reliable, keeping their smart appearance to the last.



Children's sizes—7, 8, 9, 10, **10 6**; 11, 12, 13, 1, **11 6**; 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, **12 6** (for Maids).

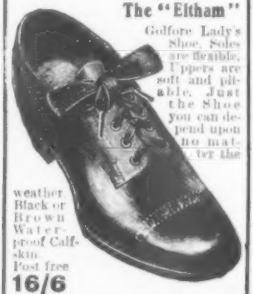
The Cromwell Brogue.



A Lady's Dress Brogue for promenade wear. Uppers are of best Calfskin, Black or various shades of Brown. A rich-looking, highly finished Shoe, very durable **22/6**

The "Eltham"

Golfore Lady's Shoe. Soles are flexible. Uppers are soft and pliable. Just the Shoe you can depend upon no matter the weather. Black or Brown Waterproof Calfskin. Post free **16/6**



Try these real Scotch-made Brogues, on the children—they're as comfortable as can be, hard as nails, and keep new-looking for any length.

Remember, a shoe's just as strong as its weakest part. Norwell's "Perth" Brogues have no weakest part—the vital points are strengthened cunningly, and every stitch betokens lengthy wear.

Norwell's 'Perth' Brogues

Direct from Scotland

For Ladies' wear—apart from their utility, Norwell's "Perth" Brogues have a piquant atmosphere about them; something to do with their "mannish cut" and at the same time the effect of their attractive moulding, which makes them worthy to dress the daintiest foot.

Norwell's guarantee perfect satisfaction with every transaction—or cheerfully refund every penny of your money.

D. NORWELL & SON,

Perth, Scotland,

Specialists in good-wearing Footwear.

(Established over 100 years.)

Foreign orders receive special attention.

Write Now for New Footwear Catalogue.







ONE TO 100 COPIES

of handwriting, typewriting, shipping invoices, reports, drawings, music, etc., quickly on the

PLEX DUPLICATOR

Outclasses all old-fashioned methods. Foolscap size, complete, **15/-**.

List No. 83 and specimens free. Of all Stationers, or

C. G. QUADRUPLEX, Ltd.,
67 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.



DON'T BLUSH.

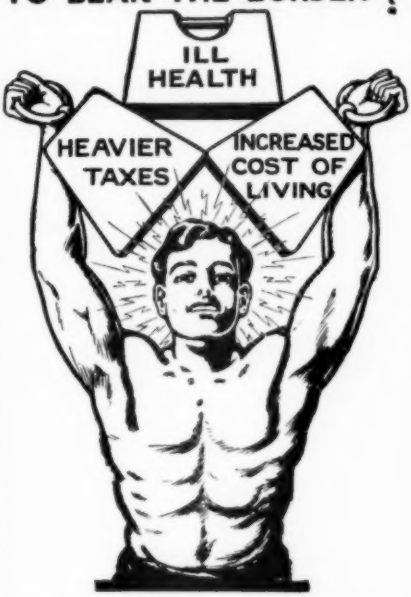
This embarrassing complaint, which has many times caused you inconvenience and annoyance, can easily be cured. Why should you suffer annoyance and at times appear ridiculous when by a new scientific discovery you can be cured in a short time, without the use of drugs, massage, instruments, and other appliances?

Blushing and Flushing of the Face is to a certain extent a disease. Proof of this is the reason why some persons suffer and others do not; but for those who do suffer, I would point out that the only cure is the entire eradication of the cause from the system.

Mr. T. B. Temple, the discoverer of the method, will be glad to send full information and booklet to any genuine sufferer. He has cured ladies and gentlemen in all grades of Society, and is constantly receiving letters of thanks. The Press are unanimous in their praise, and everyone who has tried it highly recommends his method as a sure and safe, harmless cure for blushing.

If you are interested, write at once, enclosing stamp, for booklet and opinions, to Mr. T. B. Temple (Specialist), 39 Maddox Street, Hanover Square, London, W.

ARE YOU FIT AND ABLE TO BEAR THE BURDEN?



In these strenuous times we must have our full resources at our command. Weakly and suffering, you cannot bear the strain. You require vigorous health and strength, and these you will only regain with Nature's own remedy: Electricity.

The celebrated "Ajax" Dry Cell Body Battery gives you just the right nature of current, of sufficient volume to saturate your whole system with this life-giving element. **It infuses new energy, vim and power into every single nerve, muscle and tissue of your organism.** You just apply the Battery for one hour daily, whilst resting, and this new life is pumped into your body without shock, inconvenience or irritation of any kind. It is powerful, but soothing, and thousands of "Ajax" patients will tell you that it achieves all we claim for it.

Cures are obtained in the most chronic cases, even when all other methods have failed. Write at once for our explanatory book entitled **"Electricity, the Road to Health,"** which describes how weakness is overcome and replaced by luxuriant health and strength; how pains and aches are driven out and all nerve troubles banished for ever.

WE SEND IT FREE

It costs you nothing, so write at once. You will then learn how Rheumatism, Lumbago, Sciatica, Neuralgia, Neuritis, Paralysis, Bowel, Stomach, Liver and Kidney troubles, and a host of others, are cured by the most successful treatment in existence. Write whilst you have it in your mind and this most interesting book, fully illustrated, will at once be sent to you under plain cover, FREE OF ALL CHARGE, by return of post. It will be an eye-opener to you, so write to-day, now.

AJAX LD

The British Electric Institute (Dept. 52)
25 Holborn Viaduct, London, E.C.



HAIR ON THE FACE

Removed by a painless method. Explanatory Booklet sent Free.

Beauty of face is often disfigured by hairy growths, and how to permanently remove these has caused much anxiety to ladies who study their personal appearances. Some have tried the painful process of Electrolysis, which leaves the skin perforated, and often these small holes become clogged, and hence other blemishes arise, such as Blackheads, Pimples, &c. There is also the dangerous depilatory which only burns off the hair, and often burns the skin. But at last science has devised a method which entirely supersedes the antiquated harmful methods.

Every lady suffering from hairy growths will be pleased to learn that these can be removed for ever by a new method which cannot possibly harm the most delicate skin. It is so unlike anything else, it is just a matter of days and the hair is gone for ever, leaving a beautiful clear skin. There is no expensive treatment or appliances to buy. You will not be put to any inconvenience. All you have to do is to be done in the privacy of your own apartments. This new method is worthy of your interest. We specially want those sufferers who have tried other methods to write, as, unless we can prove this we can do all that we claim, we do not ask you to take up this treatment.

HOW TO OBTAIN INFORMATION OF THIS NEW METHOD.

Just send your name and address, with a stamp for postage, to **The Capillus Manufacturing Co., 339 Century House, 205 Regent Street, London, W.** You will receive a full description of this simple and remarkable method, which will enable you to remove all superfluous hair at home at a very slight expense. The description is posted to you FREE in a perfectly plain and sealed package, and you should have no hesitation in writing. You will be delighted to learn how easily and surely superfluous hair can be permanently and painlessly removed. Why not write to-day?

NO MORE BALD HEADS!

KEENE'S POMADINE

is positively guaranteed to stop your hair falling out, and to promote a heavy, luxuriant growth in a few weeks, or money refunded!

Procure from your Chemist (or send us P.O.) a **2/6** or **5/-** tin of Keene's Pomadine. Use the entire tin, and if not thoroughly satisfied with the wonderful improvement in your hair growth we will refund your money.

POMADINE IS DAINTILY SCENTED WITH ATTAR OF ROSES.

In tins at **2/6, 5/-, 10/6** and **£1 1 0.** At all Chemists'

Special Offer To enable everyone to try this marvellous new hair treatment we will send a trial tin containing 20 full Pomadine hair treatments for **6d.** Stamps or P.O.

THE KEENE LABORATORIES, 50 GRAY'S INN ROAD, LONDON.

STAMPS

LET US SEND YOU A FREE SPECIMEN COPY OF THE "STAMP COLLECTOR" containing over 200 competitive advertisements from all over the world, and Notes on Current Topics and New Issues.



— Send a Postcard NOW —

MARCOSCHIS, Dept. Q, BIRMINGHAM.

Are you DEAF?

Every deaf person may now enjoy conversation and attend Church and Theatre. Science and invention have at last produced the Earphone which overcomes all deafness. Don't worry if other aids have failed. Send for free particulars. Long trial allowed without obligation to purchase.—**BRITISH EARPHONE CO.**, Herald Chambers, Martineau Street, Birmingham.

For Clean Sweeping without dust use the

Bissell Carpet Sweeper

Sold everywhere Price from 10/6

HIMROD'S ASTHMA CURE

If you suffer from Asthma, Catarrh, Ordinary Colds, you will find nothing to equal

HIMROD'S CURE FOR ASTHMA

At all chemists 4/3 a tin.

PAINLESS AND PERFECT DENTISTRY.

DR. G. H. JONES, Surgeon-Dentist, England, and Doctor of Dental Surgery, U.S.A., has been awarded ten gold medals (great International Exhibitions) and H.I. Majesty's Surgeon-Dentist Certificate for the best Dentistry.

Dr. G. H. Jones invites free consultation daily and supplies the best dentistry on his absolutely painless system on very moderate terms, and within the reach of everyone.

58 GREAT RUSSELL STREET, LONDON (Directly opposite the British Museum entrance). Telephone Museum 785

WHY PAY SHOP PRICES?

All goods sent direct from Factory to Home.

Do you know that practically **ALL** Bedsteads are made in Birmingham? Why not then buy one direct from the workman's hands in a perfectly new condition? I also supply **BEDROOM SUITES, SITTING-ROOM SUITES, SIDEBOARDS, OVERMANTELS,** &c., at very **LOW PRICES,** payable in any way that will suit you. My lists contain a very large assortment of most recent designs.

Prompt despatch. Packed free. Carriage Paid.

DISCOUNT FOR CASH, OR PAYMENTS TO SUIT BUYERS' CONVENIENCE.

Send post-card to-day for Illustrated Price Lists (POST FREE).

CHAS. RILEY, Desk 17, Moor Street, BIRMINGHAM.



Show Rooms: 62 MOOR ST.

Established 24 years.

Special Attention given to Export Orders.

THE WAR AND CHARITIES

Dear Readers,

The strain of the War, mentally and financially, is felt by all of us, but we must not let the work of our great Charitable Societies go by default. More than ever it is necessary that those who can should render assistance to these sorely tried institutions.

May I earnestly commend to your sympathetic consideration the claims of the charities mentioned in the following pages?

I shall be most pleased to receive and pass on subscriptions for any of these. No deductions are made for office expenses.

Your friend,

The Editor

La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C.
Christmas, 1915.



YOU CAN BRING
HAPPINESS
TO
7,480
CHILDREN
IN

DR. BARNARDO'S HOMES

THIS CHRISTMASTIDE BY SENDING

2/6

marked "FOOD-BILL FUND (per *The Quiver*)," to the Honorary Director, William Baker, M.A., LL.B., DR. BARNARDO'S HOMES, 18 to 26 STEPNEY CAUSEWAY, LONDON, E. Cheques and Orders payable "Dr. Barnardo's Homes."

CHARITABLE APPEALS

The Editor of "The Quiver" will receive and acknowledge any Donations or Subscriptions for the undermentioned Charities that are forwarded to him, addressed La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C.

SOCIETY FOR RELIEF OF DISTRESSED JEWS

74 BROOK GREEN, LONDON, W.

Our **EARNEST APPEAL** for Relief for thousands of Jews from Palestine—now destitute in Egypt—has enabled us to send £100 to them, to care of an English Gentleman recommended by the Rt. Rev. Bishop MacInnes, who assures us that they are "very deserving and industrious."

We **PLEAD AGAIN** for more help **"In token of Christian sympathy."**

FUNDS THANKFULLY RECEIVED by

The Treasurer, F. A. BEVAN, Esq., 54 Lombard St.; Messrs. DRUMMOND, *Bankers*, 49 Charing Cross; and by E. A. FINN, *Secretary*, 74 Brook Green, W.

THE QUEEN'S HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN

Late "North Eastern" Hospital

HACKNEY ROAD, BETHNAL GREEN, E.

President: The Earl of Shaftesbury.

134 Beds always full. 33,000 Out-Patients annually. 87,000 Attendances. £12,000 a year expenditure. Assured Income under £1,000. No funds in hand.

Economically administered.

Inquiry System in force for prevention of abuse.

PLEASE HELP

T. Glenton-Kerr, *Sec.*



SEND A CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR THE NATION'S CHILDREN TO THE Waifs & Strays Society

Present family to be clothed, fed and trained exceeds 4,600.

Over 20,000 children rescued.

Gifts gratefully received by

PREBENDARY RUDOLF,

Old Town Hall, Kennington Rd., London, S.E.

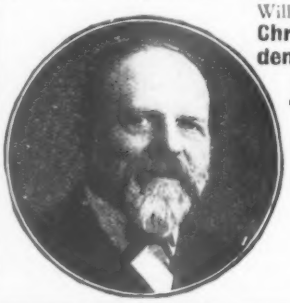
Cheques, &c., crossed and payable to 'Waifs and Strays.'

THE GREAT "CHEER UP" SOCIETY OF LONDON'S POOR AND CRIPPLE CHILDREN

If you would like to help little children of the London slums **who need somebody's help,** little cripples in one- and two-roomed homes, hungry boys and girls, ragged boys and girls, and the many anxious homes from which brave men have gone at their country's call, please send some gift to-day to the

SHAFTESBURY SOCIETY & RAGGED SCHOOL UNION

This Society has a large knowledge and love, trained by over 70 years' experience in its ministry to the physical and spiritual welfare of **London's poorest children,** and is an expert organisation for the wise and economical relief of their manifold needs.



Will every lover of children help the Society this year to provide **Christmas Cheer, and to meet the heavy Winter demands upon its war depleted funds?**

I shall very gratefully acknowledge all contributions of money or kind sent to me at the Society's Headquarters:—

SHAFTESBURY SOCIETY AND RAGGED SCHOOL UNION,
32 JOHN STREET, THEOBALD'S ROAD, LONDON, W.C.

John Kirk

Director.

CHARITABLE APPEALS

The Editor of "The Quiver" will receive and acknowledge any Donations or Subscriptions for the undermentioned Charities that are forwarded to him, addressed La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C.

Colonial & Continental Church Society.

A TYPICAL CASE OF NEED

SEVENTY MILES FROM A CLERGYMAN.

A Clergyman in Saskatchewan, formerly a London Curate, who, though single-handed, has to hold services in six different centres, some of them twenty miles apart, writes:—

"Some Church Members who are living SEVENTY MILES FROM S. are conducting services amongst themselves, going to one another's houses, and reading the Church prayers and lessons. I was sent the names of these people by the S.P.C.K., but it is very little we can do for those who live so far away."

Can you not help us to help such men?

We are in Sore Need.

We owe upwards of £9,000 to our Bankers.

Treasurer: F. A. BEVAN, Esq.
Secretary: Rev. J. D. MULLINS,
9 Serjeant's Inn, Fleet Street, E.C.

THE BUDGET
AND THE
S.A.M.S.

"It must be a subject of congratulation to every member of the House that the country had accepted these burdens with almost unanimous consent. It was without precedent, he believed, in the history of the world, that during a great war a nation should come forward and literally ask to be taxed."

(Chancellor of the Exchequer.)

WHICH IS THE GREATER, PATRIOTISM or SPIRITUALITY?

The Nation agrees to over 10 per cent. Income Tax for the defence of an
EARTHLY KINGDOM.
Are Christians prepared to do as much for the advance of the
SPIRITUAL KINGDOM?

THE SOUTH AMERICAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY IS IN URGENT NEED OF MORE SUPPORT.

S.A.M.S. Office,
20 John Street, Bedford Row, W.C.

THE CHURCH ARMY

HAS BEEN ASKED TO PROVIDE MANY

Recreation Huts, Tents and Clubs

(some in town or country houses close to the firing line)

for our brave troops in the United Kingdom, France, Gallipoli, Malta and Egypt

In addition to the large number which this Society has already established, and which are AN UNSPEAKABLE BOON to the Soldiers.

PLEASE HELP us to comply QUICKLY with the urgent demand.

A Hut costs £300.
A Tent costs £150.
Maintenance £2 a week at Home, £5 Abroad.

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I shall be so grateful for some help from you to bring brightness and gladness to their hearts this Christmastide.

Yours on behalf of the friendless,

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Commissioner.

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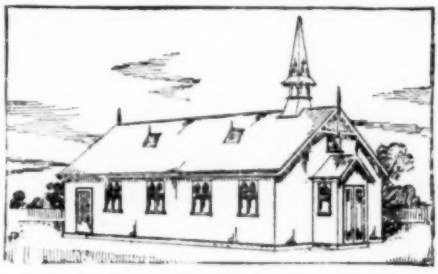
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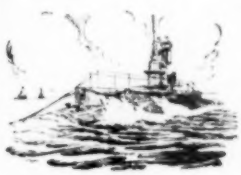
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THE QUIVER

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IN THE WAR ZONE

The Work of the Colonial and Continental Church Society

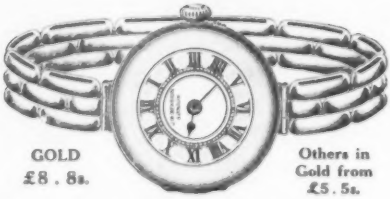
NOTHING is "as usual" since the war started, and naturally the Church and philanthropic societies are profoundly affected in various ways.

Take the Colonial and Continental Church Society, for instance. Much work of a quiet order was going on, prior to the war, on the Continent of Europe. The war drums have altered all that, but the work has not ceased. Chaplains of the Society are detained behind the German lines, but they are still at work ministering to British women and children and to British wounded prisoners. In the zone of our armies they are at work at Boulogne, Dunkirk, Calais, Le Touquet, Rouen, etc.

Still, in spite of the war, there is much of the ordinary, everyday affairs to be attended to, and great efforts are being made to keep going. Take the work in Western Canada, for instance. Crippled by war and previous bad harvests, much help is needed by the Western dioceses, and this the Society is attempting to give.

The Society is in sore need of financial support to sustain the work; upwards of £9,000 is owing to its bankers, and an urgent appeal is being made for funds to meet this deficiency and provide for the future. Will readers of THE QUIVER help? The Secretary, Rev. J. D. Mullins, 9 Serjeant's Inn, Fleet Street, London, E.C., will gladly acknowledge gifts, or they may be sent to the Editor of this magazine.

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Boots Pure Drug Co., Ltd.



"In that instant Rowley tore past with a wild yell of triumph"—*p.* 100

Drawn by
A. C. Michael

The QUIVER

CHRISTMAS·NUMBER

VOL. LI., No. 2 DECEMBER, 1915

"WILD AS A HAWK"

By

HELEN WALLACE

IF Eustace Ware had been inclined to think Old England somewhat tame and colourless after the protracted "grand tour" from which he had just returned, the big courtyard of the old Bell Inn, the most famous coaching hostelry on the Bath Road, would have given the lie to such a conclusion. No Italian *albergo* or Spanish *fonda* could have shown a gayer spectacle on that sunny afternoon of late September. The Hunt Ball was to be held that night in the Assembly Rooms, and all the county from the remotest driving distance had been thronging all day into the old market town of Riversley. But it was not the cheerful bustle in the yard itself, the crowd of coaches, the alighting guests, the breathless ostlers unyoking the reeking horses which held Ware's eye.

Round the first floor of the big, rambling building ran an open, arched gallery, and over its sturdy russet pillars and timbers a Virginia creeper had flung itself in riotous, luxurious masses, now glowing blood-red in the mellow autumn sunshine against the flawless blue of the serene sky.

And in one of these festooned arches stood a tall girl—a daring and splendid figure in her scarlet riding-habit, a picture fit for that gorgeous frame of ruddy sprays and waving tendrils.

Under her tricorne riding-hat her black hair was massed round a pale, clear, proudly chiselled face, where the only colouring was the vivid red of the full, firmly-set lips, while from beneath level black brows and lashes the luminous dark grey eyes looked out over the bustle below, as if in haughty challenge. A moment may affect a lifetime, and to his last breath, and when all other earthly things were fading, Eustace Ware would carry undimmed in his memory that pageant of sunshine and colour, and that fair, proud, young face dominating all the pomp of crimson and blue and gold.

"Who is that?" he exclaimed to the man who had ridden in with him, one of the many new acquaintances he had made since his return.

"What, don't you know her?" said the other with an odd smile, though his eyes, too, had kindled. "To be sure, you're a stranger here yet; but it's a wonder you haven't heard of Chris Yorke, old Kit Yorke's lass, whom he would fain have had a lad and has allowed to grow up like one. They say he named her Christopher at the font, but the parson changed it to Christine. But, of course, he and your old uncle had that deadly quarrel and didn't speak for years. Old Kit's as obstinate as a pig—a pig!—a whole herd of swine, and, once his temper's up, no more able to judge between right and wrong than between his right and left hand by the time supper's over," with a laugh. "He may want to

fasten the feud on you, so better take time by the forelock and try your luck with the lady. She's a splendid bit of womanhood, but wild as a hawk."

Ware leaped from his horse and called his groom. He wanted to put an end to young Deverill's talk. It seemed an insult to the girl standing in lonely splendour above them.

Kit Yorke! Yes, he had heard of him, and of the life-long bitterness between him and his uncle. What the original cause of it had been Eustace had never learned—some said one thing, some another. As a boy and a youth he had been very seldom at Wareham, where his uncle, a reserved, silent man, had led a retired life, and it had been a mighty surprise to him when on his tour the news had reached him of his uncle's death, and that he had been appointed his sole heir.

Now he had just entered upon his kingdom. All the world was smiling on him. The county was prepared to receive the new owner of Wareham with open arms. He would meet many friendly people at the ball to-night, some charming faces would brighten for him; but when evening came and he entered the big Assembly Room he was rather ungratefully thinking only of Chris Yorke, standing alone in the pride of her beauty under the flaming canopy of the creeper. Surely he would see her again; surely she would be at the ball in spite of Deverill's enigmatic hints.

And there indeed she was. Across the wide space of polished floor she was standing in the full light of a sconce of twinkling wax candles.

If she had been a striking figure on the balcony, she was more so now in the scanty, classic draperies which were all the mode in Farmer George's day, while in contrast to her filmy white gown she wore a massive wreath of crimson roses set upon her black hair like a crown, which might well have overweighted any head less proudly borne.

Around her was a knot of young men, whom Ware already recognised as the livelier "bloods" of the county, and by her side was a tall young fellow with a fine athletic figure but a somewhat heavy, commonplace face. But there was no woman near her. The sense of her isolation which had already struck Ware was more strongly marked now. He glanced with a thrill of indignation round the serried row of turbaned and be-feathered chaperons, each with her little flock of white-clad damsels safely under her eye and under her wing.

He had to pay his respects to the more important dowagers, and to go through what now suddenly appeared mere duty dances, and it was later in the evening before he could approach that tall rose-crowned figure. She was still surrounded by her little court, to whom she was disdainfully throwing an occasional word or glance as one might toss a bone to an importunate dog. Ware could only get Deverill to present him. The dowagers were one and all "vastly sorry that they could not oblige him, but they had no acquaintance with the young lady."

"Ware," she said slowly; "does a Ware really want to know a Yorke?"

"Why not, madam? My uncle made me his heir, but not, I hope, to his grievances or his mistakes. We are a new generation, why should we not make a new beginning?"

"I am my father's daughter," said Chris Yorke with bitter significance.

"You are yourself!" exclaimed Ware with almost passionate emphasis.

Something of the strange new feeling which had been surging up ever stronger and stronger all the evening must have spoken through his voice and look, for the grey eyes suddenly softened. This was something different from the banal, fulsome compliments to which she was too well accustomed, and it touched the sore, lonely heart under its armour of pride. She gave him her hand.

"True, the quarrel was none of our making. Why should we not begin anew?" she said with a smile which to Ware seemed to outshine all the candles, as if the morning had suddenly broken and paled the winking lights.

"Begin anew!" The words had surely been prophetic. To Ware that night indeed marked the beginning of a new life, and the rest of the evening might for him have been summed up in two words: "Chris Yorke."

He did not dance much with her. He had no wish to make her more conspicuous or to set unfriendly tongues a-wagging, but when his eyes were not following her through the throng, the thought of her pervaded his



"'Who is that?' he exclaimed to the man who had ridden in with him"—*p.* 91.

Drawn by
A. C. Michael.

whole being like the subtle perfume of her roses. He was conscious, too, of a sudden overwhelming access of fury when the tall young fellow, who seemed to have constituted himself her squire-in-chief, became too assiduous in his attentions, and young Sir Nicholas Rowley, a neighbouring landowner, would have been greatly amazed to know that the new squire of Wareham had been itching more than once during the evening to fling him over the trellised balcony.

With such a beginning what could there be but the inevitable ending? Through all the centuries the feuds and rancours of the older generation seem always to have served merely as fuel to the flame of the passion of the next. Young and ardent, Eustace Ware laughed to scorn the idea that a dead and gone quarrel could separate him from the woman who had taken such instant and absolute possession of his heart and life. What though Kit Yorke instantly turned his back upon "That scoundrel, Ware's nevvy," when they chanced to meet at a "justicing"? What though long miles of foul country roads lay between Wareham and Studley? Ware's horses were good, and a young man and woman already touched and drawn together by life's strongest magnet were bound to meet. And meet they did; and as autumn waned the little pretence of accident and surprise which attended their first encounters was soon dropped. Each knew that all the joy and meaning of life was concentrated in these rare meetings under the thinning boughs and the wintry skies.

At last there came a day when Chris opened all her heart, and Ware realised with reverent wonder what a treasure had been kept pure for him through the girl's unmothered, unloved, uncared-for youth, amid the reckless rout at Studley. "Wild as a hawk" she might still be at times, but true as steel, and his heart overflowed when she said to him with a noble simplicity, in answer to some passionate words of his:

"It's I who owe all to you. I don't think I could have stood it much longer. If I had been left to myself I might have done some dreadful thing. Who would have cared? It would only have been what people expected from 'mad Chris Yorke.' Yes, that's what they called me, and then you came and showed me what life might be——"

"Darling, what do we know yet of what life might be?" cried Eustace. "Do you ever think how hungry you are keeping my heart with these stray meetings? Let me go to your father——"

"No, no!" broke from Chris, like a gasp.

"Why, what could he do?" smiled Ware. "If he won't listen to reason we must e'en take the law into our own hands, and why not now?"

"You don't know my father," said Chris with a slight shudder. "Afraid of him? No!" with a sudden flash of pride. "At least, not for myself," her voice falling.

"But it's Christmastide," urged Ware. "Surely if ever old grudges are to be forgotten——"

"Christmas!" Chris laughed drearily. "What does that matter? Christmas only means more wine and dicing at Studley. Peace and goodwill have forsaken it long ago."

"Then before another Christmas——" began Ware hotly, and the drear December dusk was forgotten for a while as he drew a glowing picture of the golden future.

Soon after they parted; but as Ware watched the last glimmer of her scarlet riding-coat disappear a chill foreboding seized him. Why had he let her go? A father's power over his unwed daughter was almost absolute, he knew, and such a father as Kit Yorke! Then he tried to dismiss his formless fear. Surely they had but to be brave, and his love was as brave as she was true, and yet—and yet——

And Chris riding away alone into the deepening night was conscious, too, of a strange new sinking of heart. She had defied her father before now, but something within her whispered that this time it would be different—*if he knew*, and she had no sooner entered the great old hall than she was aware in every fibre that he did know.

The careless disorder of the stately place was veiled by the dusk, which was only partly dispelled by one or two guttering candles on the wine-stained oaken table, and the ruddy glow of the monstrous fire before which a great silver tankard was slowly blackening. Before the fire Kit Yorke was standing, still a grand figure of a man in his hunting pink. Years of excess

and reckless living had blurred, but had been unable to destroy the strong contours of his face, the high fine outlines, which in a softer mould were reproduced in his daughter.

"So, madam, you're slinking home at last from your secret meeting, after trailing about the country in the dark like any drab with that young rascal who has stepped into old Ware's shoes," he said quite calmly, as if he had been uttering some ordinary greeting.

"And if I had been indeed what you call me, what have you ever done to prevent it?" said Chris bitterly.

"I'm going to prevent it now," said Yorke with the same ominous calm. "You won't see that young blackguard again. Oh no, you won't," as, in spite of herself, a sudden defiant laugh broke from the girl's lips. "I know what you're thinking—'Love laughs at locksmiths, a post-chaise and Gretna Green'—like enough you've planned it all already, but there'll be none of that," with a sudden snarl. "There's plenty of ways to bring you to heel if I chose to take the time and trouble to tame you; but as I don't choose, I'll provide you with a husband who'll keep the whiphand over you, and I'll tell you how I'll do it," with slow malevolence. "Unless you give me your word—you're a Yorke, so I believe you'll stand by it—that you'll have no more to do with that rascal Ware, and that you'll marry Nick Rowley or some decent man, well—it'll be the worse for your fine popinjay lover. He'd better set his house in order."

"What do you mean? You wouldn't dare——" exclaimed Chris. The arrow had found the joint in her harness. Threats against herself could not move her, but Eustace—ah, that was different!

"There'd be no risk, don't alarm yourself on my account," said Yorke. "I've only to pass the word to some dashing young blades I know. Ware is tripped up—contradicted in some public way—any trifle will do. My gentleman sends his seconds to him. Ware can't refuse. In an hour or two they're facing each other, pistol in hand. Click!"—he made a motion as if touching a trigger. "It's all over in a moment, and the world's rid of the last of the Wares, curse them all! Jack Scarlett or Wat Curtice never miss. It's a neat little plan, isn't it? Here's to its success!" and he stooped for the tankard, took a long draught of the ale, and airily wiping the foam from his lips, gazed at his daughter with a smile.

Chris stared at him in dead silence.

"I think you're a devil," she said at last, as she sank heavily into one of the big oaken chairs. The plan was diabolically complete, and it could be so easily carried out. Ware could not refuse a duel and keep his place among honourable men, that she knew, just as she knew that the man whom she called father would not shrink from carrying out the hideous scheme.

Yorke bowed as if accepting a just tribute. "I thought you'd see reason," he said.

"Reason! It's a reason I want, and I've a right to demand it," cried Chris, springing up again. "You threw a dreadful word in my face just now, a word that except for God's mercy I might have deserved," with a shudder; "and now at last, when by His grace I meet a man—a *man*, I say—not a brute or a devil or at best a fool, like the men who surround you, and among whom you flung me—a man who has shown me what a man's life should be, clean, honourable and good, who has proved to me what a true man's love is——" Her breath caught, the blood surged in crimson splendour over her white face. "Now—now you would cut the one good thing out of my life—take my one chance from me. Better cut the heart out of my body at once. People have called me 'mad Chris Yorke'; they may have worse to say of me if you take this one hope from me, if you throw me back on the old life. I'm pleading for my own sake; but what has Eustace done? You never even saw him till a few weeks ago. Why should you want to destroy him, to ruin both our lives?"

"He's a Ware. I give no other reason—that's enough!" broke in Yorke. His eagle face was set like a mask through the eyeholes of which hate incarnate looked out, a hate which indulged passion and long brooding had nursed into sheer mania, all-dominating, all-possessing. On that point the man was no longer sane, he was possessed by a devil indeed. "He's a Ware, and before good Yorke blood is mixed with the puddle of his, I'd shoot you both with my own hand; but that would be murder, while my little plan is only an affair of honour, a matter

between gentlemen," with a sardonic laugh. "Now I want no more heroics. I give you your choice fair and square, and you know I'm a man of my word," and again he lifted the tankard and took a long pull at the reaming ale.

Chris walked down the dim hall and came back into the circle of the firelight. Her face was set, but her eyes were wild. In that moment she had fought down and conquered her own heart.

"I'll promise that I'll never marry Eustace Ware—never even see him again, if it must be"—the words came through ashen lips, "if you swear that you'll do him no harm, now or ever. Surely that's enough!" her voice breaking into a cry. "You can spare me the rest. What does it matter to you?"

"No, it's not enough. It must be all or nothing. It's my duty as a father to provide for your future," with his old sneering laugh. "You promise me to marry Rowley—he's wanted you long enough—or the game's off."

Chris thrust her hands suddenly into the black mass of her hair. Like the click of the pistol her father had imitated, something seemed to snap in her brain. She broke into a wild laugh that echoed eerily up to the oaken rafters above.

"Nick or any decent man—that was what you said. If I must marry, I must; but I'll take my chance, and not your choice. To-morrow is Christmas Eve—I'll marry the first man who comes here on Christmas morning—there, let that content you."

She was mad Chris Yorke indeed for the moment.

"Done!" exclaimed Yorke. The wild pledge chimed in with his reckless humour. "Your hand on it, lass!" gazing with a sort of impersonal admiration at the girl. The transport of wrath and despair and passion which possessed her gave to her dark beauty a strange sinister significance in the red, leaping firelight.

With another laugh she struck her hand into his, and then, flinging it from her, rushed from the hall.

Christmas Eve, and the blackness of the moonless night was rendered still thicker and darker by the dense powdery snow which the fierce north-easter was driving before it in whirling, stinging masses, choking the breath, filling the nostrils, blinding the eyes of the solitary man still urging on his weary horse against the blast, though every plodding step seemed slower than the last. At last Ware drew rein and stared perplexed into the dim obscurity through the bewildering flurry of the snow.

That vague misgiving with which he had parted from Chris the night before had grown in urgency till reason could withstand it no longer. He had been a coward to let her go away alone, a fool to let himself be persuaded even by Chris to delay his suit. What was to be gained by delay? It was not likely to soften Kit Yorke's monstrous prejudice. No, he would put his fate to the touch, he would go that very night to Studley. But the increasing storm and the deep and founderous roads had made progress slow, till when utter darkness had long fallen he had to admit bitterly that whatever might be happening at Studley it was wholly impossible for him to reach it that night. He must look to his own safety instead and seek the nearest refuge, and he guessed that he could not be far from Rowton. He had no desire to claim Sir Nicholas Rowley's hospitality, but he had long since been able to smile at his first jealous rage against him. He knew that he had no cause to fear him as a rival, and, like Chris, was inclined to regard him with good-humoured contempt.

Sir Nicholas seemed to be keeping open house that Christmas Eve. Late though it was, every window was ablaze. When, from the blackness and storm without, Ware stepped into the glare of light and the roar of voices in the great dining-room, all the county, the male portion of it at least, seemed gathered there. After the first tumultuous moments the apparent crowd of flushed faces resolved itself into the half-dozen or so of young fellows who made Sir Nicholas their model, and, as Ware recalled with distaste, buzzed about Chris whenever they got a chance. Sir Nicholas boisterously welcomed his unexpected guest.

"Come along, Ware," he shouted to him. "Better late than never. The more the merrier. Every man's a friend to-night. I don't bear any malice, and, gad, I've no need to now," with a hiccupy laugh.

Ware let the words pass. Host and guests were evidently well wined; and when

presently Sir Nicholas got up amid shouts of "Toast! Toast!" he swayed upon his feet, and the brimming glass uplifted in his hand slopped over.

"Our usual toast, goo' frien's," he said, thickly and with tipsy gravity. "But you all know how the luck has turned for me at last; so I'll give you 'The fair Chris, and—and a prosperous ride to-morrow.'"

The din broke out again, and amid the roar of voices and the rapping of glasses on the gleaming mahogany someone shouted: "Go to bed, Nick, you'll need a cool head for the roads to-morrow—to-morrow—why it's to-morrow already."

"Not a bit, he can take his time," cried another; "it's a walk-over."

Ware's blood had leapt up as he heard the name of the girl he loved roared out by these coarse voices, but it was vain to think of calling half a dozen drunken men to account. Under cover of the din he asked a lad next to him what good luck awaited their host on the morrow.

"That'sh telling," said the boy, for he was little more, with an attempt at a wink. "But I sh'pose you may know it too. Mad Chris Yorke has vowed she'll marry the first man who comes to Studley to-morrow, and an express has come from old Kit bidding Nick take the road betimes. Don't look very like it just now; but he's an uncommon hard head, has Nick," said the lad, wagging his own solemnly.

Ware heard no more. What had happened at Studley? Had some devilry of her father's driven Chris mad indeed, that she should have given this frantic pledge? His mind was in a wilder whirl than the dancing flakes without; but one thing was clear, at all costs he must be first at Studley to-morrow. He would fain have set off at once, midnight though it was, but the storm forbade, and his horse must rest awhile. Ere long the revellers round him were unconscious of his presence. Heads had sunk upon the polished table, snores were mingling with the broken snatches of song as he slipped from the room. The slow hours were like a nightmare dream. As he listened to the raving of the wind he was racked with fears for Chris; he dreaded to snatch a moment's sleep lest he should be too late; but at last, as night gave place to earliest morning, he judged he might make his venture.

The storm had passed. The stars glittered keen and clear, the moon, waned to a silver thread, hung low in the sky as he led his horse out into the yard. He had been sorely tempted to take a fresh mount, as Harold had had a hard day and but a brief rest; but horse and man knew each other, and Ware knew also that he could rely upon him if he must call for a supreme effort. His chief hope was that he had gained a good start, for the great house was still all dark and silent, when one of the leaves of the big yard-gate slipped from his hand as he passed through, and closed with a clang like a thunderclap. A sleepy shout arose from behind it, but Ware was off.

He could not press his horse at first, for though in places the road had been swept clear by the gale, in others the drifts were deep, and he dared not risk floundering into them. To his fever of impatience their progress seemed interminably slow; but he reckoned they had covered half the way when, in the dead hush before the dawn, there came the sound which all the time he had been dreading to hear. Through the clear frosty air it came distinctly to his ear, the clink of hoofs upon the hard road, then a brief silence which told of the muffling snow, then nearer and clearer the clatter of hoofs again. A horse was being pushed recklessly forward behind him. Harold must mend his pace.

On again—the good horse answered gallantly to the call, spurred, too, by the thunder of the hoofs now ringing close behind, as a triumphant view-hallo came from the pursuer, who had the advantage also of a broken track. It was a ride for more than life, for all that would make life worth having, for the deliverance of the girl he loved from a hopeless fate. Ware flung away his heavy riding-coat, stooped over his labouring horse, whispered encouragement into the pricked ears. The snowy hedges flew past, he was still leading. It might be an affair of minutes, but he would do it yet—he must do it!

There was Studley now! The old grey gables rising from the whitened lawn, the smoke curling into the pale, ineffable blue, the red winter sun coming up behind the great elms and glinting on the gilded vanes. In the pure clarity of the morning light he could even see a scarlet gleam on the whiteness of the



'Around her was a knot of young men the livelier 'bloods' of the county. . . . But there was no woman near her. . . .



He had to pay his respects to the more important dowagers before he could approach"—p. 92

Drawn by
A. C. Michael

terrace. Was Chris to wait for her deliverer in vain?

On Harold, on! Courage a little longer, good horse! The goal seemed close at hand; but as Ware knew, the road made a long sweep round, climbing a high bank which overhung the little river which wandered through the park. That steep hill once surmounted there was a fine level stretch, till the road dipped down again to the bridge which spanned the stream at Studley gates. If Harold could but reach the top! Ware cast a desperate glance up the mounting road, and then—just then, the flagging horse blundered into deeper snow, struggled—stopped, and in that instant Rowley tore past with a wild yell of triumph.

"No good; it's a walk-over now!" he shouted.

For one sickening moment Ware tasted despair as he watched Rowley's horse gallantly breast the hill and break into a long, easy stretching canter on the level beyond. No, he could never overtake Rowley now by that road; but there was another way! He dragged Harold's head round, and set him straight for the steep, shelving bank, straight for the stream below, straight for Studley! It was sheer madness; but perhaps he was mad for the moment. He saw nothing but that red speck on the terrace, knew nothing but that he must reach it somehow. The snow flew in clouds, the bushes cracked, as slipping, straining, sliding, horse and man came crashing pell-mell down, where the most reckless rider had never ventured before.

Through the stillness the sound of that thunderous descent reached Studley. Two pairs of eyes were intent on the wild rider. Through the leap of all her pulses, the fierce upward surge of hope, Chris divined who was coming. Could it be that she was to be delivered at the eleventh hour from her mad vow? Then hope was quenched in horror. How could he cross the deep, sluggish stream? Horse and man would plunge headlong into the black depths. Kit Yorke sauntered up.

"Your Christmas wooer is in most flattering haste. I didn't think even Nick would have risked such a Dick Turpin affair. If he takes the jump at the bottom alive he'll deserve all you can give him, and more," a hint of anxiety underlying his cool ironic tones. "Even if it were that scoundrel Ware, though it can't be, I'd almost forgive him."

The man and the girl held their breath. The moment was close at hand now.

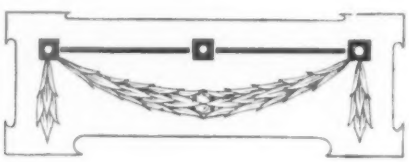
And beyond the stream, Eustace Ware took his life into his hands. He set his teeth, rammed the spurs, unused till now, into Harold's heaving flanks, and lifted the spent horse to the tremendous leap.

Crash! He was flung amid the brushwood on the farther side. Harold with his forefeet on the bank was struggling desperately for foothold, a human appeal in the dilated eyes. Though it might lose him all for which he had risked all, Ware could not desert his friend. His desperate need seemed to fire the exhausted creature to a last effort. With a mighty splash and heave Harold was safe upon the bank, and, leaving the trembling beast, Ware raced swift and straight across the lawn.

The sun broke golden through the elms. Chris sprang from the terrace and rushed to meet her deliverer. A long sunbeam irradiated her face, which was illumined with a light brighter than the clear shining of the fair morning.

"*You!*" was all she could utter; but the rapture in the word was reward enough for Eustace Ware.

Love had come to Studley on the day of peace and goodwill.





THE HAPPIEST CHRISTMAS EVE

By

J. J. BELL

FOR Miss Hester Mavis, of Laburnum Villa, in the unimportant country town of Littleford, Christmas Eve was at once the happiest and the saddest day in the year. If we add that by making it the happiest she also made it the saddest, you will perhaps feel that the statement requires some explanation; in which case you are invited to read farther.

Time was when lady novelists were given to placing their heroines before the mirror and allowing them to describe in detail, with more or less modesty, the personal charms reflected therein. In some instances one was almost overpowered by the lists of loveliness; while, if the worst came to the worst, one was cheered by the discovery of "redeeming features" in amazing abundance. In the days of her youth Miss Mavis had read of such heroines, and envied them. Often had she followed their example by consulting her mirror, and just as often had informed herself that she was "ab-so-lutely plain." Doubtless she did herself something less than justice, for, after all, the average face does not see itself at its best in the glass; self-consciousness, for one thing, does not lend enchantment to the view; yet her verdict must be accepted as correct. Miss Mavis *was* plain, so far at least as the casual eye would have judged; and as none but casual eyes regarded her in her maidenhood, and as sickness and comparative poverty came upon her home at that period, she passed through her teens and twenties with never a glimpse of a lover, and entered her thirties with never a hope—maybe, never a thought—of one.

Certainly she had other things to think of. At thirty she found herself alone in the world, with very little encouragement to remain there. Years of attendance upon an invalid mother and a disappointed father had prevented her qualifying for any of the money-

earning services open to woman; and now she was too old to begin. She was in despair when the hand of Providence was stretched out to aid. As the nearest relation of an aged person whom she had never met, she inherited a home in the country and a small income. Being city-bred, she thought at first of selling Laburnum Villa and investing the proceeds, but the offers received for the house were few and far from tempting, and she decided to live in it for a year and see what happened. At the end of the year she no longer even dreamed of selling. The country life suited her, the neighbours were kindly, and she was beginning to feel at home. But her income was barely adequate. A few pounds more would make all the difference.

After much cogitation and study she caused it to be known in Littleford that she desired to open a small school for very young children. She offered only the most elementary tuition—merely a preparation for the other schools in the neighbourhood. As soon as the announcement was made she felt like recalling it. The Littleford people would jeer at it, the established schools would resent it, and the whole affair would prove a fiasco. Yet she began her first session with seven tiny pupils, who, if they did not learn much, enjoyed themselves most heartily and chirped Miss Mavis's praises abroad continually. The following year brought her ten pupils, and the next twelve—which were as many as she could manage; wherefore in the five years that ensued she actually refused pupils, and had a few pounds to put in the bank.

But the money seemed a small matter to her now. It was the children that counted. She would have starved, gone feeless, rather than do without them. Undoubtedly she had found her vocation. Yet within her happiness dwelt an ache that time only increased. She was not satisfied with teaching—and playing with—the children. She would fain have cared for them in other ways; washed and dressed them, fed them, kissed and fondled them, seen them fall asleep and waken up—done all that their mothers might do—all that she herself might never do. Verily the good things of this world are unevenly divided.

On each Eve of Christmas she gave a party which was the event of the year to herself no less than to the juvenile guests. It began with a Punch and Judy show and finished with a Tree, and held all sorts of delights in between. The preparations occupied her hours out of school for weeks; the purchases accounted for a big percentage of the total school fees. She rejoiced in the labour and gloried in the extravagance. As Christmas Eve drew near she was thrilled with the most delightful feelings of anticipation; on its arrival she fairly overflowed with goodwill and loving-kindness and merriment. Until the last moment of the party she radiated happiness.

But when all was over, when she and the maid had tidied up, when the last of the festive lights had been put out, when the house seemed suddenly to become quiet and dreadfully empty—ah, then she began to pay for her happiness. In the privacy of her parlour, late into the night, she paid for it in tears of love, in sighs of loneliness, in ache of longing—and, perhaps, poor soul, in pangs of envy. Other women had so much, and she had nothing. She was a borrower of many joys, a possessor of none. She had to repay the loan when she had most need of it—on Christmas Eve, when the coldest heart warms to childhood—at night, when a woman's instinct is to protect, to cherish, to listen to soft breathing, to dote on sleep-flushed cheeks and innocent parted lips and care-free eyelids. . . . Yet, a year thence she would borrow again, as eagerly as ever. Poverty grasps at the loan, however heavy the interest. And Hester Mavis, with the bitterness that was in her spirit, but not of it, craved a loan exceeding all she had yet borrowed and repaid. "Dear God," she would murmur when midnight was come, "if only I could have a little one sleeping in my house for a single Christmas Eve."

II

ALTHOUGH Mr. Merideth, the lawyer, showed her nothing but a pleasant politeness when they met at social gatherings, Miss Mavis could not doubt that he regarded her with anything but friendly feelings, nor would she have attempted to deny that some hostility on his part was natural. She first heard the story of Mr. Merideth about a year after her settling in Littleford. A neighbour calling one afternoon kindly supplied the information which Miss Mavis would have been happier with-

out. Gossips are often at their worst when they tell the truth.

"Is it possible," exclaimed this gossip, "that you did not know at the time? Why, everybody in Littleford knew!"

"I only knew," said Miss Mavis, "that Mr. Merideth was my great-aunt's lawyer. It was he who handed over the property to me."

"A bitter pill for him!" commented the visitor, who for some reason or other did not like the lawyer. "My dear Miss Mavis," she continued, "Mr. Merideth *always* expected that Laburnum Villa and the money would come to him."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Miss Mavis, "how horrid!"

"Your great-aunt told everybody she was going to leave it to him. Goodness knows what made her change her mind at the last moment. It would have come in *very* useful to him."

"You mean that he—he needed money?"

"Frightfully! You see, his partner had made an awful mess of things—speculating and so on—and the firm was all but bankrupt. Mr. Merideth has been hard up ever since, and is likely to be so for years and years, with so many debts to pay off."

"Poor man! I wish you hadn't told me."

"It is better that you should know, my dear. And I have always felt that the reverse was quite good for him. He was rather a conceited sort of person."

Miss Mavis, who at that time had met him but once, remembered him merely as a very handsome man with greying hair and exceedingly courteous manners. She sighed again, wishing she were wealthy. The sigh and the wish were to be repeated at intervals in the future. Mr. Merideth, who often looked pale and tired, would have been astonished—and probably mildly amused—had he been informed of the secret solicitude for his general health which each meeting stirred in the spinster's bosom. Knowing her circumstances, he had never allowed bitterness to mingle with the honest disappointment consequent upon her aged relative's eleventh hour change of mind. But Miss Mavis felt his burden as it were upon herself, and prayed nightly for its removal or, at least, its lightening. At the same time, it should be recorded, she was not a little afraid of the man.

Miss Mavis's interest in childhood was not confined to the small persons attending her school. She could have told you the names of the majority of the youngsters in the neighbourhood; she had a smiling acquaintance with practically all the babies who had passed beyond the stage of infantile stolidity and discretion. Like most plain people's, her smile was devoid of self-consciousness; it was accordingly pleasant without being insipid; it had, moreover, the inestimable charm of sincerity. Time and experience are not necessarily cruel to the human countenance; everything depends on the character they bring out. That is how the "ab-so-lutely plain" girl of twenty so often becomes the "something-very-fine-about-her" woman of forty. In a sense it is the poorest of compliments to assure a beautiful matron that she might be mistaken for her lovely débutante daughter. Hester Mavis looked all her age and experience, but she also looked her character, which was all honesty of the lovable sort.

It was drawing near to her seventh Christmastide in Littleford, and to her sixth Christmas Eve party. On a certain Friday afternoon, in the course of her shopping, she had entered the premises of an enterprising grocer who was making a display of seasonable dainties especially suitable for hanging on trees and placing in stockings.

She was paying for a purchase of these when she was made aware of the presence of two little boys, strangers to her. They were obviously twins, and she guessed that they were under the charge of an elderly woman whom she recognised as Mr. Merideth's housekeeper.

The woman being engaged at the provision counter, the youngsters had stolen across the shop and, hand in hand, were staring with wistful solemnity at the array of seasonable dainties, particularly at a tray of fluffy yellow chickens whose interiors were stuffed with sweets, and whose heads came off when desired in the most convenient fashion.

It was the whisper of one of the little boys, explaining these wonders to the other, that first attracted Miss Mavis's attention. She glanced downwards, said to herself "Oh, the darlings!"—and smiled. The little boy who had been whispering smiled frankly in return, his brother coyly. Miss Mavis turned to the salesman, bought two fluffy chickens, pressed them into two small hands,



"When all was over, the house seemed suddenly dreadfully empty"—*p.* 102.

and fled from the shop. She was so afraid lest the guardian might see and object.

She met the twins again the very next day. They were standing at the gate of Mr. Merideth's garden, looking like little boys who don't quite know what to do with themselves. As she approached she heard the bolder one say "That's her!" The twain brightened visibly and held out for her attention the fluffy chickens, now, alas, empty. She noticed that the boys were nicely dressed and groomed; yet there was something about them which suggested to her that they didn't belong to anyone in particular. The thought occurred that they might be nephews of the housekeeper, and that Mr. Merideth had permitted her to have them with her for the holidays.

She stopped and said, as if she had known them all their lives, "Good morning, and how are you both to-day?"

"Quite well, thank you," replied the bolder, and nudged his brother, who repeated "Quite well, thank you," almost inaudibly.

"You don't know who I am, do you?" she said, her eyes devouring the fair young faces.

"You're the Chicken Lady," came the frank answer, followed by the faint echo, "You're the Chicken Lady."

"I never had such a nice name before," she remarked. "I wonder if you would tell me your names."

"I'm Tom and he's Tim," answered the chief spokesman, and nudged his brother again.

"I'm Tim and he's Tom," whispered the other, with a bashful wriggle.

Miss Mavis regarded him tenderly. "You're not afraid of me, are you, Tim?"

Tim glanced at his brother as if for guidance.

"Oh, no," said Tom, "he isn't really afraid. But, you see, he's half an hour younger than me, so he's not so brave."

"I see," she returned gravely. "Now," she continued, "I wonder what would happen if you took the heads off your chickens. What do you think?"

They stared wonderingly.

"Try," she said encouragingly.

Off came the heads, and in went two pennies. Four eyes and two mouths became rounded like "O's."

And just then a voice behind the shrubbery called the boys by name. Without hesitation they took hands and ran up the path.

Miss Mavis had fallen in love with many children since coming to Littleford, but the twins seemed likely to provide the worst case of all. Perhaps she was vaguely aware that they *wanted* her love, whereas all the others had merely accepted it. For the remainder of that Saturday and the whole of Sunday her mind and memory were full of Tom and Tim.

About noon on Monday she took her courage in both hands and called to see Mr. Merideth's housekeeper, bearing an in-

vitation for the twins to her Christmas Eve party.

The housekeeper proved unexpectedly garrulous. "Oh, no, Miss Mavis," she declared at once, "the little boys, poor things, are no relations of mine, nor of Mr. Merideth either. They are the sons of a gentleman who used to be Mr. Merideth's partner in the law-business. It happened before my time, but I've heard tell that the gentleman was no better than a fraud—nearly ruined Mr. Merideth, and then ran away—went abroad with a young wife, poor thing. And now they're both dead, and no one wanted the boys, and so Mr. Merideth said he would take and bring them up, though goodness knows what he's going to do with them. I do my best, but it's not a very cheery house for little ones. They're good little fellows, but I can see already that they're beginning to weary, and they've only been here ten days. Of course, Mr. Merideth having to hurry away last Wednesday on business made a difference——"

"Mr. Merideth is away?" said Miss Mavis, getting in a word at last. "But you expect him home before Christmas Eve?"

The housekeeper shook her head "That's the pity of it. He saw no chance of getting back—he's in France—till after Christmas. I'm sure it's most kind of you to ask the boys to your party, but I don't know what to say. You see, ma'am, he left them in my charge."

"The party is only from three till six-thirty, and I make a point of giving nothing indigestible at my table," Miss Mavis said. "Unless you have made some plans——"

"Oh, dear, I've been at my wits' end, wondering what I could do to amuse the poor little fellows. I never had children of my own, and I know I'm a perfect stick with young folks."

"Let them come," begged Miss Mavis, adding recklessly, "and I'll put it right with Mr. Merideth when he returns."

The housekeeper hesitated and was lost. The boys were summoned.

"This kind lady," said the housekeeper, "wishes you to go to her house on Christmas Eve——"

"To stay!" cried Tom, delightedly.

"To stay!" echoed Tim, in an awed but glad whisper.

"No, no," began the housekeeper.

"Oh!" exclaimed Miss Mavis, suddenly all of a quiver. "Why not, why not? I should like it better than anything in the world, and I would keep them so safe. . . . Just over Christmas—only two nights. Oh, I implore you to let them stay." Pale and red by turns, she continued to beg for her heart's desire, while Tom and Tim jigged in their excitement.

"Oh, but it would never do," said the housekeeper when *she* could get a word in. "What would Mr. Merideth say?"

Miss Mavis stuck at nothing now. "I'm sure he would approve. He—he is a great friend of mine. I—I haven't the slightest fear."

The housekeeper, however, was firm, though she expected a visitor for Christmas, and it would have suited her very well to have the house to herself. "To tell you



"Miss Mavis's interest in childhood was not confined to the small persons attending her school"—*p.* 103.

Drawn by P. Tarrant.

the truth, I daren't risk it," she said at last. "It can't be done."

Tom and Tim burst into tears and precipitated themselves into the arms of the woman they hardly knew. But was not she the Chicken Lady—was not her friendship already a proved thing?

She comforted them with promises of a good time on Christmas Eve, expressed gratitude (for the smaller mercy) to the housekeeper, and took her departure. Of course she had asked the impossible, she told herself, and for a couple of hours she deluded herself into believing that she was quite resigned.

But the following day and the next again—the day before Christmas Eve—beheld her entering the lawyer's home. And after the second visit she emerged in trembling triumph.

In addition to her good heart the housekeeper chanced that morning to have a "bad head," and the twins had taken to riotous behaviour.

"You can come to my house at any hour, day or night, if you are anxious," Miss Mavis in desperation assured her; "and I promise to send you word if I have the slightest doubt about anything."

And so the housekeeper gave in. "Well, well," she said, her hand to her aching brows, "I do want the poor little fellows to have a happy Christmas, and I doubt if I can give them that. I'll risk it, Miss Mavis."

Having embraced the twins she could have embraced the housekeeper, too, but sent her next day, instead, the most beautiful umbrella in Littleford—Miss Mavis flew home on the wings of ecstasy.

"Sarah! What *do* you think has happened?" she almost screamed at her maid, the moment the door was opened.

"Not the Punch and Judy man took ill?" cried Sarah anxiously.

"Two dear little boys are coming to stay here over Christmas!"

"What next?" gasped Sarah.

"What next?—why, you goose, we must have the big front bedroom fired and the linen and blankets aired——" Miss Mavis let forth a torrent of domestic duties which would have swamped the wits of a maid less solidly sensible than Sarah.

"Very good, ma'am," said Sarah, when her mistress stopped for lack of breath; "I'll attend to it all. But if you don't take a cup o' tea as soon as I can make it, and lie down for an hour, you'll be having the jumps, and then there won't be any Christmas at all. You're all of a quake."

III

AT all her past parties Miss Mavis's happiness might have been likened to a full-blown rose that fell to pieces as the last cab rumbled away. On this Christmas Eve it was as an expanding bud. Its perfection was still to be realised.

For the first time she bade her little pupils "Good night" without a pang; for the first time she did not sigh as she lowered each no longer necessary light; for the first time she did not fall immediately and frantically to the business of "tidying up."

When the door had closed on the last departing guest, Sarah, coming out of the kitchen with a tray, was stricken motionless at an imperious sign from her mistress.

"Hush, Sarah! Listen!"

At the end of a long minute—"Yes, ma'am, I'm listening," Sarah muttered.

"Did you ever hear anything so wonderful?" Miss Mavis asked, her gaze on the drawing-room door.

"What, ma'am? I don't hear nothing special?"

"Don't you hear Tom and Tim talking?" The whisper was charged with awe and ecstasy. "If I didn't hear them, I don't think I could believe that they were really in my house! Could you, Sarah?"

"Yes, I couldn't, ma'am," said Sarah patiently. Her mistress had been asking absurd questions all day.

Suddenly Miss Mavis became practical. "Is everything ready upstairs?" she inquired briskly.

"Yes, ma'am. Grand fire, night-clothes toasting, pigs in the bed, water in the bathroom boiling fit to burst the pipes—and oh, ma'am, the bedroom does look that beautiful! Shall you want me to help with the young gentlemen?"

"Well, perhaps I may, Sarah. I have never had to bath two little boys before," said Miss Mavis, who had never bathed one, and hastily entered the drawing-room to hide her happy blushes.

The twins were quite ready to retire, but brightened up during the process of disrobing. The Chicken Lady's awkwardness



"She bade her little pupils 'Good night.'" 070

A poem by P. Tarrant.

amused them immensely. The bath, too, was great fun; they did not get *much* wetter than the Chicken Lady.

"Are we going to stay here always?" asked Tim, who had got over his early shyness, while she was drying him.

"Are we?" cried Tom, behind his brother for once.

"Would you like to stay here always?" she asked.

"Yes—yes—yes!"

But she did not pursue the subject.

Presently they were snug in bed, enjoying their "night-caps" of hot milk with sponge biscuits, while Miss Mavis made a great display of hanging up stockings.

"Oh, Tom, I do love the Chicken Lady, don't you?" said Tim in a loud aside.

"I love her like to bust," Tom declared.

Next moment he became deeply interested in the electric torch and the button of the electric bell (to ring in the hostess's room) which Miss Mavis had provided on a table at the bedside, and which she had purchased for the occasion. He was asking questions about them, when Tim broke in with:

"Oh, oh, Chicken Lady, we've forgot something!"

"What have we forgot, dear?"

"Santa Claus's supper."

Miss Mavis looked puzzled.

Tom explained. "You put the supper on a tray, and you put the tray on a chair, and you put the chair in front of the fireplace, and Santa gets it when he comes. And you put a card on the tray, with big writing—'S. Claus, Esquire'—so he knows it's for him."

"What a lovely idea!" said Miss Mavis, and rang the bell.

"But the fire must go out before he comes," said Tim, "or he might burn his toes."

"Certainly. I'm sure it will be out by the time he arrives. Now what have I to tell Sarah to prepare for Santa Claus?"

They named a number of good things, and when Sarah had gone, Tim said:

"Chicken Lady, are you *fearful* rich?"

"Why do you ask that, Tim?"

"'Cause you just give us *everything* we want."

"Chicken Lady," said Tom.

"Well, dear?"

"May I ring the 'lectric bell whenever I like?"

"Whenever you like, Tom."

"And make the light whenever I like?"

"Surely!"

Tom drew a long breath. "I don't think I *could* want anything more—could you, Tim?"

Tim wagged his drowsy head and yawned. "'Cept what Santa Claus brings," he murmured, as an afterthought.

They fell asleep, none too soon for her conscience, but far too soon for her heart.

It was a little after nine o'clock. The gas had been extinguished, but a pink fairy-lamp burned on each end of the mantel-shelf, and the fire still glowed comfortably. Miss Mavis, seated by the hearth, glanced round the lofty spacious room with its woodwork of white enamel, its pinkly tinted paper whereon old-fashioned rosebuds seemed to have been lightly scattered; and she reflected that it had been nothing less than a heavenly inspiration which had caused her to have the guest-chamber "done up" a year ago.

But her eyes soon went back to the bed. What exquisite hours these last three had been! Her old dreams had come more than true. Yet she went on dreaming new ones. . . . After a little while she got up and moved closer to the bed, and stood gazing on the sleepers. Only an hour ago their eager hands had slipped round her neck, their innocent lips had touched her own. In all her life nothing so sweet, so exquisite, had happened to her. And even if the future——

She was startled by a faint sound at the door. Then she smiled; it was only Sarah to ask about some trifle.

"Well, Sarah?" she whispered.

"A gentleman to see you, ma'am."

"A gentleman! Who——"

"He didn't say, but I think he's Mr. Merideth, the lawyer."

Miss Mavis felt faint.

In the drawing-room, which Sarah had reduced to some semblance of order, she found him waiting. He greeted her with his usual courtesy, apologising for the lateness of his call. She gave him her hand, unable to utter a word, then with a nervous gesture



"Presently they were snug in bed."

Drawn by P. Tarrant.

invited him to be seated. He placed a chair for her, but remained standing.

In a few words he explained that he had found it possible to get home earlier than he had originally hoped. "I arrived less than an hour ago," he proceeded, "and I felt my first duty was to thank you for your great kindness to the boys. I do so now, Miss Mavis, and more heartily than I can say." He paused for an instant. "I hope they have not been troublesome. I could hardly blame my housekeeper, for I ought to have wired her as to my return. My idea of producing a pleasant surprise was a foolish one. Well, Miss Mavis, I must not detain you. I have come to relieve you of the charge—or rather, charges—which you so kindly imposed upon yourself." The words were spoken lightly enough, but instinctively she knew they were spoken in earnest.

"You—you wish to take the boys away?" she said at last in a faint voice.

"Yes. There is no longer any necessity for their trespassing on your hospitality," he said formally, though not unpleasantly. "A cab is waiting."

"But it is so late—they are sleeping soundly—they might catch cold," she said helplessly, hopelessly.

"I have brought abundance of wraps, and my housekeeper has supplied the cab with hot-water jars. The weather is mild."

She had nothing more to say. She could not strive with the man whom she had injured, however unwittingly, in the past. If this were revenge, he had a right to it.

She rose wearily. "Will you come upstairs, please?" she said, and led the way.

Even as he entered the dimly lit room his eyes took in its charm and the evidences of thought and care for the comfort of the guests. The softly glowing fire, the pretty lamps, the Christmas decorations, the supper tray with its big card whereon was printed "S. Claus, Esquire"—he noticed these things first. Then he perceived the stockings—still empty—a whole string of them along the foot of the bed—and the table

with its bell-button and torch, plate of biscuits and glass of water, also two fluffy yellow chickens . . .

Then his gaze fell upon the children, and rested there. So long did he remain motionless that at last the woman waiting by the hearth raised her head and glanced at his face. The tenderness of his expression was a revelation, a shock, to her.

"Mr. Merideth," she whispered, "I—I will leave you to waken them," and left the room.

He overtook her on the landing. "Miss Mavis," he said hurriedly, "forgive me, and let the boys stay with you over Christmas. I find I cannot give them what you are giving them. Nothing like it. I thank you with all my heart and wish you 'Good-night.' Don't trouble to come downstairs with me."

"Oh, but I must," she returned confusedly. "I—can't let you go—like this."

In the hall he spoke with a somewhat shamefaced look and downcast gaze. "In a little town like ours, Miss Mavis, one's affairs are apt to be everybody's. I know now that your goodness to Tom and Tim has more in it than mere charity, more than just seasonable generosity; but you may have suspected that it was not in my power to give two little boys the best of everything——"

"Oh, please don't go on!" she cried gently.

"Pray permit me to finish—for my own sake. Until a week ago such a suspicion would have been fully justified. I confess I had not the means to enable me to bring up two little boys as you—or I—would like to bring them up. But Tom and Tim were apparently friendless, and I—well, I confess they appealed to me. However, things are now different. I need not trouble you with my affairs except to tell you that they have altered for the better—very much for the better, and that the future of those two little boys is quite secure."

"Oh, how beautiful!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands.

He lifted his head and regarded her with a faint smile. "Do you know," he said, "I was unreasonably cross when I reached home to-night. I had been rehearsing the rôle of a sort of long-lost uncle and Father Christmas combined—and, after all, there was no audience but a trembling housekeeper. I had fancied it would be rather a good way of getting acquainted with my boys." The possessive pronoun slipped out; only she noticed it. "But now that I have seen them up there, I can only congratulate them and thank you." He turned to the door.

"How can you forgive?"

"I'm sure I don't know—but I do," he replied with a laugh, and opened the door. "I don't know whether they will look at presents from me, but perhaps you will permit me to bring the parcels here to-morrow morning. May I?" He held out his hand.

"Please."

"Thank you. Good night." He went down the steps into the darkness.

She found courage and called after him.

"Mr. Merideth, won't you come to breakfast—nine o'clock—and give your boys their presents then? It—it would be absurd for you to come as an ordinary visitor. And—and please spend the day with—your boys, and eat turkey with—us all. And then—well, then I won't feel quite so mean as I do now. Say you will!"

Merideth might have smiled at her impulsiveness, or laughed awkwardly on his own account; but he did neither.

"You offer me," he said gravely, "the happiest Christmas of many years, and I will come to-morrow morning and wish you the same."

Once more she stood watching the adorable sleepers.

"*His* boys," she said softly, and in her full heart was neither envy nor jealousy.

THE CHRISTMAS OF ETERNAL PEACE

A Dream Parable

By the Rev. ROBERT F. HORTON, M.A., D.D.

IT was Christmas morning five years after the great war. And I knew at once it was Christmas, but I knew also that something had happened. I seemed to have awoke like Rip Van Winkle, and was aware that the years had passed away. I knew it was Christmas morning because I heard in the air peace and goodwill to men. But I knew that something had happened because it seemed as if the words were spoken not by angels but by men; the very atmosphere was throbbing with the words. And walking out for a few minutes to the familiar common near my house I saw a vast monument reared in the centre of it; such a monument as we used to rear for soldiers who had fallen. But it was not for soldiers who had fallen, it was for peace which had come. And a glorious inscription in golden letters flashed in the morning sun: *Pax vobiscum!* And above was a colossal statue of the One who was born on Christmas Day.

An Amazing Change

I began eagerly to inquire what had happened in these intervening years, and what had brought about the amazing change which I felt, even in the atmosphere. And gradually I picked up the following story, which I must state briefly because the details are too numerous to give in an article; they would require a book.

It seemed that, at the end of the great war, when peace was made, the country in Europe which had been responsible for the war felt triumphant. She had gained some of the objects for which she had fought; she had humiliated her neighbours, and trampled into dust a little country at her doors. And when peace was signed she announced to the whole world that her victorious armies had established the greatness of the Fatherland for ever. She had in her possession the ports which made her mistress of the seas; she had plundered the wealth of the neighbouring countries, and was able to re-establish her commerce; and she had triumphantly maintained her borders from invasion. This was her victory, this was her success.

But before many months had passed an appalling change had come, a change in the spirit of her dream. She began to find to her dismay that she had forfeited the good opinion of mankind. There were things which came to light, irrefutable evidences which were produced; and history began to be written which gibbeted her name to all posterity. She found that she had done things which the world could not forgive. She had violated the elementary laws of humanity, she had made all treaties of no effect. She had produced a sense of despair in the nations, had even dared to exasperate the conditions of war, because she had set at naught all previous conventions, and had disregarded the very principles that she had herself approved.

She found that this the world could not forgive.

It was not the isolated act of outrage, cruelty, or devastation that the world resented; it was the consistent policy which had made it useless in the future to summon Hague Conventions, or to establish Geneva arbitrations. This country, in her overweening pride, had shattered for ever not a city or a university, but the fundamental principles of our civilised races.

An Offended World

She found that the world would not forgive her ruthless attacks upon innocent travellers by sea, and the malevolent scorn with which her sailors had watched their victims perish in the waves. She found that her invention of poisonous gases, and her determination to wage

war not by chivalrous fighting but by systematic poisoning, had left a mark on the withered heart of the world.

She had begun an epoch of horror. Science was to be used in order to destroy. The intellect of a cultured people was to be chiefly prized because it could make destruction more rapid and more certain. She found that this the world could not forgive. She was identified in the eyes of mankind with the poisonous gas she had invented and used. She was regarded everywhere herself as poisonous gas, a deadly and dangerous instrument of destruction, an all-pervading miasma of cruelty and torture. She found that the very name of her country which had been her boast, her pride, her vaunt before the world, had become a synonym for brutality and refined malignity. Wherever men spoke the word, they shuddered; and the very language of the country was heard throughout the world with loathing and horror.

The Mark of Cain

Gradually she realised that she was like Cain on the earth, and the mark of Cain was on her brow. Wherever she went, mankind desired to slay her, and were only restrained by the mercy of God, that had become precious to men because her mercilessness had made all men love mercy.

But more than this, she found that her valuable ports and her mastery of the sea were perfectly useless to her. For no nation, not even the most ignorant, would trade with her. Nothing made in her factories could be sold in the world. No book issued from her press could gain readers. Her internal trade languished, for she was cut off from the whole world. Even rivalry with other nations ceased, because other nations would not imitate what she did, but left to her alone her inventions and her productions.

This had continued for three years, and this great country still boasted that she was the mistress of the world. She did not at first realise what had happened, and her people felt no inconvenience from their isolation. But then there grew in the very heart of the nation a yearning which was stronger than patriotism itself. It was the passion of humanity, demanding not national greatness but inclusion in the family of mankind. Poets began to sing of human brotherhood as the one thing desirable, and to lament the dividing straits which kept them from their kind. Thinkers began to shape a philosophy which rested not on national greatness but upon humanity as a whole. Preachers and other teachers yearned towards a peace in which once they had been at one with the great fellowship of the preachers and teachers of the world, and openly taught that nothing was gained for their country unless their country could gain the love of mankind. At first these were but a few isolated voices, and they were disregarded in the general pæans of victory, and the pride of restored manufactories and reopened universities; but the few became many, and the many became a vast majority, and presently the whole country seemed of one mind. It was as if a great wail passed over the land, a cry for unison, for human love, for the good esteem of men.

In those days it must have been the most interesting thing to travel in that country, where the main thought was to make more deadly armaments, to build larger vessels, to organise the whole population for another war. Because, though this process went on as before, the heart was going out of it. No one really believed in it. Everyone said, "Why, this is the very method that has brought us to our isolation, and has earned for us the execration of men. Why continue what has produced nothing, or worse than nothing? We have sown the teeth of the dragon, and the harvest of armed men has been our ruin."

A Brotherhood of Justice

Meanwhile the nations of the world, awed and subdued by that triumphant and insolent Power, were drawn together in a brotherhood which had never been known before. Different in language and even in religion, they were at one in their recognition of the vast disaster which had fallen upon men; they were convinced that no hope lay in any direction but in that of absolute brotherhood. And with a rapidity which is almost inconceivable the millions of mankind were united in a great determination, and

drawn into unity of action, to save themselves from that which had proved the curse, and the blight, and the doom of civilisation.

Science became international. A fellowship sprang up and brought together the thinkers of all races. Religion was simplified into the one thought of mutual help and effective brotherhood. The one dogma brought all faiths into unison; it was the dogma that God is love. And that nation with the mark of Cain upon its brow was only spared in deference to this conviction: that God, who is love, protected it, forbade its extermination.

The Repentance of Germany

This was the state of the world when the great change occurred in that nation. The waters seemed to rise until they were an impetuous flood. The whole country was submerged. There was but one thought everywhere, one demand: "Reconcile us to our fellow men. Find some atoning sacrifice that can wash out the horror of our past, this blood upon our hands, this stigma upon our name, this charge produced against us by mankind. Let us be rid of it at all costs."

And presently the whole nation rose in a great act of repentance, and appealed with a passionate desire to the heart of humanity which had been outraged, and to the mercy of God, who had given them success only to show them that it was failure, and had at last taught them the supreme truth that no success comes by hatred, and that what nations, like men, require is the love of their fellows. That cry of penitence rang through the world. It reached the heart of God, but it also touched the heart of man. What arms and outrages could not effect was effected by the cry of a penitent people. The little tear once more could wash away the guilt.

Now what happened when the heart of the world was moved it seems has been told in so many noble and beautiful forms that everywhere monuments, paintings, literature, commemorate that great conversion of mankind. The results were evidently rapid, much more rapid than one could ever have dreamed; it was as if suddenly mankind had got into the right groove, and advanced with enormous velocity. The response came from that united body of nations that the country, which was like an erring brother, was wanted. That, indeed, all nations were waiting for it, and felt incomplete without it. For the first time for some years that country perceived that she had alienated from herself a world that had at all times been only too ready to welcome her in the great body of humanity. She found that her distinctive gifts had been appreciated, and that her contributions to the general stock of human welfare had been recognised as the property of mankind. She found that the alienated feeling had been a protest against her crime, and not a hatred to herself. The signs of penitence had silenced the hatred and had elicited the love.

The first result was that in a great congress, such as had never been seen before, held in the capital city of that country, all nations assembled to devise the way of universal peace. At that congress there was one book, written by the greatest thinker that the country had ever produced, Immanuel Kant—the title was "Perpetual Peace"—which had lain unnoticed for more than a century. Its shrewd wisdom and wide humanity had found no response in the national heart before. But now it was discovered that this was the great contribution that the country had made to the thought of the world; and the philosophical cry "Back to Kant" seemed to be a reversion to this forgotten treatise.

The Reconciliation of Mankind

Men rubbed their eyes with astonishment to think that the quiet philosopher of Königsberg had in his solitude seen what now, after so great and fiery a conflict, had come to pass. Just as Spinoza had been forgotten and recovered after a hundred years by Goethe, so Kant, neglected for more than a hundred years, was discovered by a united nation. And it was found to be a supreme achievement of philosophy to produce the reconciliation of mankind. Wisdom from above is first peaceable. In that congress the delighted world acknowledged that it was that country which had led in the way of the great achievement; though it had been unhappily that country which

delayed the achievement by its desperate cult of militarism, and by its stupendous effort to dominate the world by force.

Away from Militarism

The great country, liberated from the burden which military despotism had laid upon her, turned with a passion to her spiritual leaders of the past, as Lessing, Goethe, Ranke, Liebig, Fichte, and the numerous names that in the desperate period of militarism had been ignored, to names as great as those that had gone before—Fechner, Mach, Ostwald, a whole galaxy of men who had made the greatness of the people and were the glory of the name, the national name. She saw her field of conquest in the mind and in science, in creative literature; and the creative epoch began again. A man was considered great as he achieved greatness in the field of the mind, as he contributed to the progress and happiness of the world. With a horror which never could be repressed she thought of the time when her noble powers had been prostituted to the task of destruction, and she had thought of science only as the instrument of torture and ruin to the world. She had come back to Kant, and she saw him as one of his pupils, Herder, had seen him:

"I have had the good fortune to know a philosopher who was my master; who in the years of his prime had the cheerfulness of youth. His open forehead, made for thought, was the abode of undisturbed cheerfulness and joy; a thoughtful speech flowed from his lips; wit and humour were at his command, and his instructive utterance formed the most entertaining intercourse; with the same spirit in which he probed Leibnitz, Wolff, Baumgarten, Hume, and unfolded the laws of Kepler, Newton, and the physiocists, he also received the then appearing writings of Rousseau, Emile, and Héloïse, as also the most recent discovery in nature; appreciated them, and always came back again to plain natural knowledge and to the moral worth of men; he encouraged and forced you in an agreeable way to independent thought."

The great thinker, debonair and courteous, master in the realm of thought and leader in the realm of morals, once more became to this country an ideal and a prophet. The kindly and generous elements in the national character seemed to spring into preternatural activity; they were carefully cultivated, but they grew spontaneously. Everyone tried to forget the awful effort that was once made to vanquish the world by frightfulness. The country made up to all who had suffered by a generosity of material and spiritual giving which was in itself a gospel to the world.

The Return to God

But not only did she return to Kant, she returned to Jesus. She realised at once how in leaving Him and His authority she had lost her way and become the outcast of mankind. She crept back to His feet as once Mary of Magdala had done, to find that His compassions fail not, and that He pardoned the great lapse and apostasy, because He loved His erring child, and desired her back in her place amongst His spiritual household. The great country began indeed to lead the world, but now her Empire was established by genuine benefits rendered to mankind in science, in literature, and even in art. She formed the very vanguard of the advancing race. It was astonishing to find what resources of heart and intellect had been crushed or poisoned by that awful dream of military domination. Now she lived again, and a grateful world accepted that supremacy of intellect and art, and was ready to acknowledge that in religion also her great gift of Luther was not an exception but a pledge; as he once, according to Jean Paul Richter, "drove the lagging centuries up the steep way," so the country began to drive the world up the way of aspiration and spiritual achievement.

And the bells of Christmas were ringing, and the peace of the world had come, because the bad dream of five years ago had been dissipated for ever; and there was no reasonable being left upon earth who did not recognise that the victory for humanity is always the victory not over men but over the force of evil and suffering, and that the only national greatness is the supremacy in service to the world as a whole. Peace on earth, and goodwill to men.



"Lucette spent a solid hour in the effort to transform herself into a great lady of old"—*p.* 117.

Drawn by Cyrus Cuneo, R.I.

GREAT-GRANDMOTHER'S DRESS

A Christmas Story

By Mrs. GEORGE DE HORNE VAIZEY

IN all the round world there was not a happier creature than Lucette Grahame. She was young, and so strong that she took health as a matter of course, and considered it one of the common-places of life; she was so slim, and dainty, and pink-and-white that people turned to look after her in the street, and every time she passed one of those see-yourself-as-others-see-you mirrors in the shop windows, detested by ordinary, undecorative females, she floated on her way feeling exhilarated by the sight of her own reflection, instead of humiliated to the dust. She had a mass of waving auburn hair, which, with the aid of a few tortoiseshell pins, "went" just as it should go, and never turned obstinate on critical occasions, just when she wanted it to look its best. She could wear any colour in the rainbow, and look pretty in it; she could even contrive to look charming wearing modern hats and dresses, and what harder test could be given?

Apart from health and beauty, Lucette owned many reasons for happiness. She was the beloved elder daughter of a happy family, and just when, at twenty-four, the time dawned when home—dear as it was—

failed to be entirely satisfactory to her heart, the Fairy Prince appeared upon the scene with praiseworthy alacrity.

He was tall, and grave, and dignified, heir to an ancestral home; devoted to his tenantry and to work on their behalf; a good sportsman, but with little keenness for the social side of life. The fame of him travelled down to the country house where the all-important meeting took place. In the smoke room the men voted him "the right sort"; in the boudoir the girls pronounced him "No use." He cared little for dances, refused to take part in theatricals, never had been known to show the faintest interest in a girl. "Stupid thing!" was Lucette's verdict on the description, and she made up her mind to retaliate for such obtuseness by taking not the slightest interest in Roger Bentham himself, but at the very moment of their introduction she realised that the task was going to be very difficult indeed.

He was not like other men. Even in the rough tweeds of shooting attire there was something about him which suggested a fob and ruffles. He had the long face with delicately irregular features, the curling lips, and deep-set eyes which one sees in old miniatures; in his movements there was a deliberateness which suggested the stately ceremony of bygone days. Despite her struggles after indifference Lucette first liked, then loved, and finally adored him with all the stored-up passion of her heart, and for one interminable week after her return home beheld life stretch ahead, empty as a desert plain.

And then one morning behold father smiling over a lengthy letter, and mother tenderly brooding, half sad, half glad; and when afternoon came, a gentle reminder, "Don't ride too far to-day. I want you for tea; there may be a friend." Lucette had no heart for friends, but she returned dutifully at four o'clock, and entering the drawing-room beheld Roger Bentham sitting beside the fire. He had written to her parents to announce his visit and the object thereof, and when tea was over the parents obligingly disappeared, and Roger asked Lucette to be his wife.

It seemed too good, too rapturously perfectly good to be true, but it *was* true! The engagement ring sparkled on her finger, letters of congratulations poured in by every post, and, best of all, Roger seemed even more overwhelmed by happiness than herself. While she was overcome with modesty at the thought that the man who had hitherto been impervious to feminine charms should have selected her as the one love of his life, he, on his part, continued to declare his unworthiness to receive the favour of the loveliest, the sweetest, the most perfect of her sex. Which was quite as it should be, and very delightful indeed.

And now it was Christmas time, and Lucette had travelled down into Hampshire to pay her first visit to her future relations. Roger's father and mother lived in an old Elizabethan mansion, which was one of the finest specimens of its age, and Lucette found it almost impossible to believe that she herself would some day be the chatelaine of such a stately home. Honestly she hoped that the day would be far distant, for the dower house, in which the young couple were to begin their married life, was as charming in its own way as the moat itself; and as for her future "in-laws," they were the kindest and least exacting of couples, and having no daughter of their own, welcomed Roger's beautiful bride with open arms.

Many entertainments had been planned to introduce Lucette to the countryside, and she heard with some perturbation that the principal of these was a fancy-dress ball to be held on Christmas Eve.

"Why didn't you tell me before?" she said to Roger, from whom the news was received, "I have no fancy dress of my own, but if I had known in time I could have borrowed one from a friend. I can telegraph, of course, but at Christmas time parcels *are* so uncertain. How horrible, if it never turned up!"

"I don't want it to turn up. I didn't tell you because I have a little plan of my own. We have a chest full of old costumes upstairs, and among them are the originals of those worn by my great-grandfather and great-grandmother in their portraits in the long gallery. That's my plan! I am supposed to be very like old Sir Roger, and, though she is not half so beautiful, the grandmother has your complexion, and is about the same size. My mother's maid has looked over the dress, and will make any alterations that are needed, but she thinks that it will fit quite well. I have taken her into my confidence, but the parents know nothing. I thought

it would please them, and it would please me too, darling, if you don't mind. I've always had a special affection for that couple. Tradition says that they were the most beloved of all the Benthams, and an extraordinary happy pair, in spite of all they came through——"

"What did they come through?" Lucette asked, but Roger put her off with an evasive answer. "Never mind that now. What's the use of discussing old troubles? The important thing is that they outlived them, and lived happily ever after. Come to the gallery now, and see what you think of the dress."

"It doesn't matter what it is like. If it were hideous I should wear it all the same, if it pleased you," said Lucette, with the docility bred of a short month's engagement, but as it turned out great-grandmother had been painted in a costume which any girl might have been charmed to don—a saque of white brocade, over a petticoat of lace looped with garlands of roses. A triangle of lace was folded loosely over her powdered locks and knotted beneath her chin, and on the long pointed hand shone a wedding ring in its first gleaming newness. It was the only ornament she wore. Lucette wondered if it had been by her own desire that had preserved this strict simplicity, since former brides were all represented wearing what were evidently family diamonds on head and breast. Perhaps great-grandmother felt like herself, that no jewel could be so precious as the ring which was the outward symbol of the union of two hearts!

Christmas Eve was a busy day. In the morning the lovers superintended the decoration of the ballroom, and later on carried gifts to the tenants on the estate. In the afternoon they had a brisk ride over the countryside, and came back in time to receive the guests who were to form the house party for the next week. Roger and Lucette condoled with each other at the incursion of outsiders. The women would fill up the drawing-rooms, and overflow into the boudoir which up till then had been given up entirely for the lovers' use; the men would lounge about the library and billiard-room; the hall would be a scene of constant coming and going. Roger, as the son of the house, must be in constant attendance on his guests; Lucette, as the daughter-to-be, must do her best for the girls.

"Shall I *ever* see you alone? Shall I ever have you to myself?" she queried wistfully, and Roger answered stoutly, "Often! You leave that to me. The oak room, darling, at the end of the long gallery. Nobody uses that room now. We'll take it for our meeting place till the house is empty again. Slip upstairs whenever you get the chance, and wait for me!"

Lucette remembered these words at six o'clock on Christmas Eve, as the women guests flocked up the wide oak stairway, to indulge in a rest before beginning to dress for the eight o'clock dinner. Roger was left behind with the men, but his eye had met Lucette's as she turned aside, and it seemed to her that it held a special message: "Dress early, and meet me in the oak room! . ."

Perhaps the wish was father to the thought, but once it had entered her head it was clearly impossible to lie down and sleep. How dreadful to waste time in unconsciousness, which might have been spent in talking to Roger!

Lucette rang the bell, summoned her maid, and spent a solid hour in the effort to transform herself into a worthy representative of a great lady of old. Slim as she was, great-grandmother had been slimmer still, but the saque hid the extra fastening which had been put on the under bodice, and for the rest the skirt was of the right length, and the old square paste buckles gave to the Oxford Street shoes the exact look of those in the portrait.

In advance it had seemed a sin to powder the golden locks, but when the deed was done, the lace kerchief knotted under her chin, and the black velvet patches placed, one near the eye, and the other by the upward curl of the lip, poudré was justified as the most becoming of coiffures!

"I *do* look sweet. Don't I look sweet, Marie?" cried Lucette, pirouetting to and fro before the glass. She admired herself as heartily as did outsiders, and that with a frankness which made it the most natural thing in the world. No sidelong looks at her own reflection for Lucette, no make-belief of depreciation. She was beautiful, she knew it; she was thankful for the knowledge. Of late days she was more thankful than ever; for was she not going to be Roger's wife?

Marie looked demurely down her nose. Under a guise of modesty, she herself was

the vainest of created beings, but it shocked her conventionality to hear her mistress admire herself. "What necklace will mademoiselle wear?" she asked primly; but mademoiselle waved her away with a determined hand.

"None, not a thing. No necklace, no bracelets, no rings except just this one. I must be like the lady in the picture."

As she spoke Lucette twisted the ring of diamonds to the inside of her fingers, and cast a surreptitious glance into the glass. Alas! the hand of the modern sports-loving girl could not be compared for beauty to that of great-grandmother's with its tiny tapering fingers and slender white wrist. Lucette hoped that Roger would not notice the inferiority, and vowed, as she had vowed a hundred times before, that next summer she really *would* wear gloves; then opening the door, she crept noiselessly down the corridor to the shelter of the oak room.

From a distant corner a clock struck seven chimes, a door opened and shut, and she heard the murmur of men's voices. They had left their cigarettes, and had come upstairs to dress. Roger would now be free to hurry through his toilet and come to join her. . . . Lucette shut the door behind her, and stood within the threshold of the oak room looking around from side to side. A fire of logs was burning on the hearth. The room was empty and silent, yet mysteriously there was in it a feeling of Life!

A thrill shot through Lucette's veins, which was neither fear nor dread, but was yet strangely eerie and peculiar. It was as if, in reverting to the costume of olden times, her vision had also undergone a change, so that what had passed unnoticed before assumed of a sudden an air of significance and familiarity. As her eyes roamed over the panelled walls it seemed to her that she recognised each outstanding beam. On the high mantel stood a row of old blue and white china vases, the wide necks capped with domed brass covers. Four! but surely there had been only three when she had seen them last! Over the deep window seats hung brocaded curtains of the rich toned rose which our forbears termed magenta. How strange that she should have thought them faded and dull! Against the farther wall stood an old cabinet and a bureau, opened to show a row of drawers and pigeon-holes. Lucette had never seen it open before, and Roger had declared that no one used the oak room—yet the pigeon-holes were full of papers.

Lucette tilted her feet upwards to lie on the settle at full length, and watched with lazy amusement the play of the firelight on the old paste buckles. Then her eyes fell on her left hand, lying among the folds of her dress; the diamonds were still hidden from sight, and the plain gold band looked exactly—exactly like——! She must remember to turn it before she went downstairs; she must be sure to remember; tentatively she lifted the right hand, but it sank back to her side. Some force stronger than herself seemed to hold her back. Well! for this one stolen hour it was sweet to pretend to be really Roger's wife.

If Roger did not hurry there would be no time left, for as hosts they must be at their post in time to meet the other guests. Lucette strained her ears to listen for the next chiming of the clock in the long gallery. How still the room was, how breathless! The very fire burnt without a sound, the powdery ashes falling noiseless as snow; and yet through it all there was that strange thrilling feeling of Life! Invisible forms seemed thronging the air; invisible hands stretched out to her own. It was not fear that she felt, but rather a great eagerness to see, to understand. She lay very still waiting for what should come. It seemed to her impatience an infinity of time before at long last there came the tread of a man's feet, and the door was flung open by her lover's hand, but at the first glance towards him every other feeling was swallowed in a rush of rapturous delight.

And indeed this was a lover of whom any girl might well be proud: tall and stately; a typical courtier in his picturesque dress of primrose and cream, and his long peruke throwing into strong contrast the dark brows above the steadfast grey eyes. Up till now Lucette had been inclined to discount the resemblance between her lover and his pictured ancestor; but now that he wore the same dress and his dark locks were hidden by the white wig the likeness was startling indeed. Line for line, feature for feature, grandsire and grandson were duplicates one of the other!

Lucette leapt to her feet. Into her joy crept a feeling of shyness, of restraint. Roger in these old-world garments assumed



"With a cry of triumph the stranger wrested his hand free, the knife gleamed in the a[illegible]"—p. 132.

Drawn by
Cyrus Cuneo, R.I.

a different personality with whom she had no acquaintance. Then her eye fell on her own glory of lace and brocade, and there thrilled within her a girlish joy in playing her part. In truth it was a pretty play which those old walls witnessed during the next minute. The girl lifted her skirt in both hands and curtsied to the ground, the man placed his hand on his heart and swept a low bow, then drawing near, he took her hand in his and greeted her in sweet old-world language.

"My love—and my lady!"

"And my most dear knight!" returned Lucette in clear, flute-like tones. Oh! it was good to own a lover like this, a lover who owned the delicacy of feeling which could enter into the poetry of the moment! Lucette felt that it was in it to hate a modern young man who would have entered with a joke upon his lips, a "Here we are again! Got 'em all on, haven't we, old girl?" banality which would have reduced the situation to prose. So long as she lived she could never forget the look on Roger's face as he bent over her hand, the tone of his deep voice as it lingered over the tender words. Still holding her hand, Roger led her back to the settle and seated himself by her side. Then she noticed for the first time that in his left hand he carried a leather case, scratched and worn by time, and fastened with an old steel clasp. He caught her glance, and smiled in response.

"Sweetling," he said tenderly, "it is Christmas time, and I have brought thee my gift. It may have decked fair brides before, but never one so fair as my dear love!"

He opened the case and held it towards her, and Lucette gasped with delight and admiration at the sight of the quaintly set diamonds which she had seen depicted in the long gallery. The long chain, waist deep, composed of a score of sparkling stars, set in silver, and connected by chains of smaller stones, fine and sinuous as threads of light. There were bracelets also and hair ornaments to match, all composed of stones of the purest water, and so deftly, so delicately fashioned by the clever workers of old, that when Lucette lifted them from the case they lay in the hollows of her hands. The woman does not live who could fail to appreciate so exquisite a gift, beautiful in association as well as in appearance, and Lucette knew moments of real joy as she played with the sparkling gems, holding them to the fire to see the rainbow play of colour which flashed back an answer to the flames, letting them ripple through her fingers, like a stream of light, then, having to the full enjoyed their beauty, the natural desire awoke to see herself decked in this new splendour. A round mirror hung above the mantel, her eyes strayed towards it, and quick to divine her thought, Roger lifted the necklace, and passing behind the settle, stooped to fasten it round her neck.

Now to masculine fingers it does not come lightly to deal with the fastenings of women's attire, and perchance the old clasp had a secret of its own; be that as it may, Roger lingered long over his task, while Lucette held the end of the chain, craning her head to watch the dear reflection in the glass. The end of the room was in shadow, but the flames lit up the bending figure in its trappery of yellow and cream. She loved to see the grave earnestness of his face, as much absorbed as though on a task of enormous moment. She loved to feel on her neck the touch of his strong warm hands. He was breathing heavily, as a man breathes when absorbed in his task, but once and again the clasp fell apart, and the ends of the chain dropped forward over her shoulder. A log stirred and fell, and a flame leapt into life. For a moment Lucette's eyeswere dazzled into blindness, then the scene cleared. . . Roger was still bending, still struggling with the clasp, but here was a strange thing; she could have sworn that she felt the touch of *two* hands, yet in the mirror one hand appeared to be raised, to be held high in the air, to be—yet how *could* it be?—*pointed towards himself!* Thought travels with lightning speed, and stages of feeling which take long in the telling may pass in the flash of an eye. Lucette pondered on the phenomena, with what seemed at the time leisurely curiosity. The hand was holding something—something bright; but it was not the flickering brightness of gems, but something larger, steadier. Inch by inch the hand moved forward, out of the shadow, into the patch of light. Round the wrist was a dull black cuff. Lucette shrieked, and leapt to her feet.

Mercifully for himself that shriek brought Roger leaping to her side, then, her frenzied glance betraying the cause of her alarm, he wheeled again, and caught the sway of the heavy curtain as the hand was withdrawn

from view. At that sight the light of battle leapt into his eyes, and with both hands he dragged at the brocaded folds, but the hidden enemy needed no force to bring him out, rather was it with an air of relief that he dashed into the centre of the room; it was Roger who fell back with a gasp of dismay as he beheld his opponent's face. He was a tall, powerfully-built man, harsh and grim of feature, yet Lucette's horrified eyes recognised a similarity between the two men, which was confirmed by the quick exchange of words.

"You!" Roger gasped. "Here, skulking, behind curtains—armed—in this house!"

"The house of my birth, to which you refuse me entrance!" sneered the other in return. His face was crimson with rage, his voice quivered with a very abandonment of fury. "Miser!" he cried. "Traitor! Hypocrite and deceiver! Refusing your own kinsman the right to live—leaving him to starve while you—you deck your lady's neck!"

"With the jewels that are her right!" returned Roger coldly. He stood still and haughty by the settle, while his opponent edged his way round the walls, till his back barred the door. Lucette cowered in the corner of the inglenook, her hands still clutching the gems. At that moment they were no more to her than so many beads. If she had followed her impulse she would have opened her hands and given them over without a moan. What value had diamonds compared with her lover's life? But she looked at his set, proud face and dared not interfere. To stay her trembling she rested her hands on an outstanding beam which bisected the panelling.

"In this case, my cousin, I hold the adage that might is right!" sneered the stranger bitterly. "It was my ancestress, as well as yours, who brought them into the family. It is not meet that a Bentham should starve, while a stranger carries a fortune round her neck, and there are those who would be glad to see me share some of the spoils. You have refused the money to keep me alive, now it is for you to decide whether you care to risk your life, and this fair maid whether she prefers vanity to love."

At this mention of his love the fire leapt into Roger's eyes.

"Leave the lady's name out of this. There is no need to drag her in," he cried fiercely. "If it is your will to fight, I am at your service, but we need no witnesses. Open the door and let the lady pass!"

"To take the jewels with her, and give the alarm to the household!" jeered the stranger. "No, no, my cousin, she shall stay here and look on while I deal with her lover; and afterwards, beshrew me, 'tis a sweet maid! I will give her a kiss for the toys!"

At that Roger gave a great leap forward, seized the hand which held the knife, and the struggle began. Lucette's sharp cry was answered by a loud "Keep back! keep back!" from her lover's lips, but as she watched the flash of the knife for which the two men struggled she knew that it might soon be impossible to obey that command. If Roger slipped, if some deft turn of the wrist gave his enemy the advantage, come what might, she must rush to his aid. But the diamonds—the diamonds!—she could not throw aside the fortune for which Roger was risking life itself. Ah, where could she hide the diamonds? And then at that very moment her clutching fingers caught in a fissure at the end of the outstanding beam where it had parted company from the wood of the background, a narrow fissure into which only her finger tips could penetrate, but some inches in length, and hidden from view behind the wide, carved rim. Trembling with agitation, Lucette opened her fingers and let the chain drop, inch by inch.

How deep was the fissure? Was it big enough to hold the precious handful? Inch after inch the chain descended, a faint jingling sound told that it had touched the bottom, but there was no block, no impediment; the bracelets followed the chain, the tiara the bracelets—apparently a dozen fortunes could have been swallowed up by that insignificant looking crack!

The two men were swaying back and forth, but surely, surely it was Roger who had the advantage! With an instinct of disguise, Lucette darted across the room towards the old bureau, and fumbled among the drawers, then from the bureau to the cabinet, from the cabinet to a deep alcove of the window. She must distract attention from the inglenook so that if by chance the stranger gained the advantage his search should be long and difficult.

The exigencies of the moment had transformed the merry girl into a cunning schemer,

but, alas! her movements had distracted her lover's attention; and anxiety on her behalf made him less swift and alert. With a cry of triumph the stranger wrested his hand free, the knife gleamed in the air, and descended on Roger's shoulder. Above the delicate satin of the waistcoat shone out a stain of red. Lucette leaped forward and grasped with both hands the ascending wrist.

For a nightmare moment the two faces loomed above her, ghastly, convulsed, then the arm on which she hung changed into a band of steel. Something cold touched her cheek; darkness descended; she was falling, down, down, through cloudy regions of space. She was shrieking in torture —"Roger! Roger!"

"Lucette, what is it? Darling! darling! be quiet, be quiet. I'm here! Roger's here! You've been dreaming, darling. Did I startle you when I touched your cheek? You looked so sweet, such a little sleeping beauty. Darling, how you are trembling! What was it all about? Lean against me. Were you nervous all by yourself in this old room? The fire is nearly out. Poor little frightened girl, you look quite scared still. What is it? What is it all about?"

Lucette lifted her head and stared blankly around. Across the room the old bureau backed stiffly against the wall, its cover tightly closed; the oval mirror reflected the folds of curtains faded to a dull tawny hue; on the settle beside her sat her lover in his trappery of primrose and white, the long peruke covering his dark locks. His face was like—the likeness was there, *but it was not the same face!*

"Did I startle you, darling? Did you think that it was Great-grandfather Roger come back to life? It *was* startling coming in on you in this guise, and waking you out of your dream?"

Lucette lifted her hand, and pushed the hair from her brow. Into her eyes crept a strange, awed look.

"No, no! it was *not* a dream! I saw—I heard."

Suddenly, eagerly, she bent forward, and turned back the lapel of Roger's coat. On the satin of the waistcoat was a cut, carefully mended; a dull yellowish stain. "Oh, Roger! Roger! I saw it—I saw it—that dreadful knife!"

Roger gave a sharp exclamation of annoyance. "So they have been at their tales already! Some people are never happy unless they are interfering. It's an old story, darling. I would have told you all about it in time, but I didn't want you to take a dislike to this room, or have any disagreeable association. Never mind, we'll change our quarters. There are plenty of other rooms."

"No one has been talking to me. I have heard no tales. It is you who must tell me. *What happened in this room*, Roger? I want to know—I must know—I cannot wait."

"I'll tell you in a moment, dear, if you wish it. You'll have to know some time, for it affects you now, as well as myself. It happened on a Christmas Eve too; that's curious, isn't it? My great-grandfather had come to meet his bride in this room, as you and I are meeting to-night. All those years, Lucette—nearly a hundred years, think of the changes which have come about in the world since then—but this old room remains the same!"

"The curtains were rose," interrupted Lucette in a low, dream-like voice, "a rich bright rose. The bureau stood open. There were little drawers and pigeon-holes, edged with brass. Those old vases were on the mantelpiece, but there were *four*—four all alike, all with their little brass covers."

Roger looked down at her with a puzzled look. "I believe there were four. I have heard my mother lamenting the breakage. Vases generally go in pairs. Well, darling, for the story. My great-grandfather was in a happier position than I am in to-night, for he had a costly present to give to his bride, a wonderful collection of diamonds which a former bride had brought into the family a century before. You have seen them painted in the long gallery. They are said to have been stones of the purest water, and the setting was a marvel of delicate workmanship."

"So fine—so flexible! As if they had been strung on silk. The setting was of silver."

"Diamonds were always set in silver in old times. Sensible idea. Gold is horribly out of tone. They use platinum nowadays, don't they? Well, I must explain that the Benthams at that time boasted a peculiarly blatant specimen of the family black sheep,



"They blazed forth in a rainbow glory of light"—*p.* 124.

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in the shape of a certain cousin Humphrey, who apparently passed his time in disgracing himself abroad, and then returning home to wring more money out of his relations. Finally my great-grandfather forbade him the house, but tradition says that an old nurse cherished an affection for the prodigal, and that through her he gleaned the information that the diamonds were to be taken from the safe and presented to the bride. It is supposed that the nurse smuggled him into this room, so that he should be present at the interview. Later on in the evening both the lovers were discovered lying unconscious on the floor, great-grandfather bleeding from a wound on the shoulder, and the poor little bride suffering from concussion of the brain. It was supposed that she had rushed to her lover's aid and had fallen heavily, hitting her head against a beam, but no one knows what really happened. Sir Roger had fainted immediately after his wound and knew nothing after that moment. She was ill for months to come, and to the day of her death her memory was a blank as to all that had happened after she entered that room. The old nurse confessed when it was too late, and the lovers recovered and lived happily ever after, but the family diamonds had disappeared. The thief had made off with his prize."

"No, no!" Lucette spoke again in the same still, dream-like tone. "They are not lost. He did not find them. She—I—she was standing in that corner. The jewels were in her hand. They were all folded together in a ball of light; so fine, so delicate—they were no weight at all. She wanted to hide them; to hide them quickly that she might help her lover—and there was a hole"—Lucette lifted her hand and pointed to the oaken beam—"*there!* in that beam, behind the carved rim. Only a small hole, a crack, where the wood had shrunk. She slipped them in there. She heard them chink as they fell. *They are there now!* All these years, these long, long years, they have been safe lying behind that beam."

"Lucette! Lucette! What are you saying? You have been dreaming, you are half asleep still. Wake up, dear, wake up! We shall soon have to go downstairs."

"Feel!" cried Lucette deeply. "Feel!" Suddenly her languor gave place to excitement. She leapt from her seat, and ran to the corner of the inglenook. Roger followed in a stride, and together they bent over the edge of the bisecting beam, together the man's hand and the girl's stretched out to feel its surface. At the same moment their fingers caught in the hidden fissure.

"It *is* there! There *is* a crack! What an extraordinary coincidence." Roger had caught fire at last. His strong fingers broke off fragments of the worm-eaten wood, but the fissure was still too narrow to allow his hand to enter. He met Lucette's eyes and spoke an eager question. "Lucette, what makes you think?"

"I don't think—I know! It was not a dream, Roger, it was a—a vision of the past! I sat there in her dress, on Christmas Eve, waiting for my lover, her own great-grandson, and the veil was drawn! I saw backward, Roger; I saw into the past. Pull again! The wood is old. Break it off with your hand. The diamonds are *there*. Oh, Roger—*pull!*"

And Roger pulled. Beneath his firm grasp the worn beam crumbled and chipped. A long split stretched from end to end, he thrust in his hand to the wrist, deeper still, half-way to the elbow. A faint clicking noise rose to his ears.

Inch by inch he drew them into sight, the clasps for neck and wrists, the long chain with its score of stars, and the thin lines of light running between. They were covered with dust, with the fallen crumblings of wood, but they were safe and unharmed; a rub with a cloth, and they blazed forth in a rainbow glory of light—all the brighter, it would appear, for their sojourn in darkness. And Roger looked at his bride, and his eyes were full of awe.

"You are right!" he cried, "It was not a dream. It was more than a dream. You *saw!* The diamonds are doubly your own, dearest—may they bring you all good luck! Ah, Lucette, when I chose these dresses to give the parents a surprise, I little dreamt what a surprise it would be! Put on your finery, dearest, let them see another mistress of Bentham clad in the glory of old!"

Hand in hand the lovers walked together down the great staircase.

THE LANDLADY

The Story of a Christmas Acquaintance, and what it led to

By BRENDA ELIZABETH SPENDER

YOUNG Osbaldistone, standing at the street corner watching the traffic, swung his new walking-stick and wondered, only not in so many words, what on earth he was going to do with himself. It was Christmas Eve, and the lighted streets were full of people who were either happy or too busy to think about whether they were or were not, and that seemed to make it all the harder to have no one to speak to and nothing at all to do. It seemed also to make it all the more unreasonable to refuse such chances of amusement as appeared to be offering themselves, since two girls, giggling together under the next lamp-post, had almost convinced him by their frequent glances in his direction—and it had required a number of such looks to do it, for young Osbaldistone was shy and conscious of being awkward, as most big men are before they are fully grown—that if he were to approach, raise his hat and say "Good evening," a comedy which he had seen nightly enacted in the parks and public places, he would certainly be no longer lonely. He was not self-consciously more fastidious than the majority of his fellows, though something within him had condemned that course of proceeding as "rotten" and "cheap" so long as Phelps, his immediate senior at the office, had been with him; but now Phelps had gone home to a Herefordshire farmhouse for Christmas, and young Osbaldistone was realising what it meant to be left to his own resources. He could see from the corner of his eye that one of the girls, at least, was pretty, and his wish to speak to them took a fresh lease of life. He was afraid of them, but inwardly convinced that once he had broken the ice they, who probably knew all there was to know about the art of picking up a chance acquaintance, would make things easy for him. He felt in his waistcoat pocket for a cigarette with which to cover his awkwardness, and, as he stood lighting it, with his stick beneath his arm, his eyes answering those of the pretty girl with an open exchange of glances, something lightly touched his sleeve.

"I—I wonder if you would be so kind as to see me across to the other side of the road? I have so many parcels, and there is no policeman here."

He started, looked round, and mechanically raised his hat, at first labouring under a vague and confused impression that the girls under the lamp-post had taken the matter of effecting an introduction into their own hands, but in that he found himself mistaken, since the person who had addressed him was not apparently very young, and made no pretence of youth in dress or manner.

"I—I should be very pleased," stammered young Osbaldistone. "Let me take some of your things."

Her voice and style of dress had curiously awakened in him some of the earliest memories his mind retained, memories of being at sea and among women who had held him in soft arms or given him sweet things to eat, or let him play with their rings and bracelets on the great ship that had brought him back from India as a little boy. It was something about her almost old-fashioned coat and skirt, the sable tippet that she wore and the lace that showed above it at her throat, which had reminded him of those first memories of his, and the girls under the lamp-post seemed suddenly crude and obvious, external and uninteresting by comparison.

"I suppose these busy roads have no terrors for you," she said as they stood waiting for a lull in the traffic.

Young Osbaldistone looked down at her from his great height, for he was a fine, tall fellow, though being yet but eighteen he carried his inches badly, and there was a boyish frankness in his hazel eyes. He laughed.

"I rather like dodging across the thick of it. It's a sort of excitement!" he added by way of apology for his taste. "Shall we go now? Will you take my arm?"

She laid a gloved hand lightly on his sleeve and they stepped into the roadway, young Osbaldistone a little amused at her trepidation until he felt that the hand upon his arm was trembling, when a new com-

punction shot through him. He looked at his companion again and more narrowly as they reached the opposite pavement, and he realised that her face was pale with something more than the colourlessness of approaching middle-age, which might have been natural to her.

"You look quite ill," he said impulsively, and so was perfectly natural with none of the usual barriers of affectation with which the young protect their ignorance. "Let me carry these things a little farther for you! I have nothing on earth to do."

"It would be very kind of you." She was still holding his arm, and he fancied that she had found it difficult to speak.

"Have you any more roads to cross?"

She shook her head, and the movement showed him that the parted hair under her black hat was beginning to grow grey.

"No, I live quite near here."

"Then perhaps—will you let me see you home?"

She assented and presently explained her agitation a little, drawing her arm away from his.

"I am afraid I must seem a silly old woman to you, but anything that calls for a sudden resolution seems to take my breath away for the moment. I hope I am not interrupting any engagement of yours?"

"I have no engagements." The young man's voice was dismal. "I'm in the Northern and North London Bank, you see, at the branch office in the High Street. I've only been in London three months, and I don't know anyone, not even any of the fellows at the office, at all well excepting Phelps, who's next over me, and he's gone home for Christmas. I don't like the people at the place where I lodge, and so of course it's rather rotten altogether—one almost wishes it wasn't Christmas at all."

"I see. Why don't you go home too—I suppose you have Boxing Day off as well?"

"Yes, but I haven't a home—at least my father is in India."

"And your mother?" Her voice was soft, almost as though she expected him to answer as he did.

"I haven't a mother, she died before I can remember anything. I've always spent my holidays at school—I might have gone back for this, but 'Old Good'—Mr. Good-enough, the head—has been ill and has to go abroad somewhere."

"Altogether things have turned out very unfortunately for you." She had stopped outside a tall, dull house with a brass plate bearing the word "Apartments" upon the area railings, and the rays from an anæmic gas lantern illuminating the glass panels of the front door. Young Osbaldistone, making ready to hand her parcels back to her, was distinctly sorry that they had reached her destination so soon. "I too have no one in London belonging to me, and I am tired of my own company too—I dare say as tired as you are of yours. If it would not be very dull for you I should be so pleased if you would come in for a little while."

Young Osbaldistone, besides wanting to say "Yes," felt that under the circumstances it would be rude to say "No," so she led him, still with his arms full of her belongings, through the narrow hall and up to a sitting-room on the second floor which had a veranda and looked upon the street. She turned up a pink-shaded lamp and smiled when young Osbaldistone said, flushing at his own "cheek," "What a pretty room!" Mary Wheeler knew well enough that a few bright cushions, a lamp shade and a couple of gay rugs thrown over horsehair chairs had achieved the miracle with a very ordinary lodging-house drawing-room, but it pleased her that someone, even this boy, should comment upon it. She made him cocoa, boiling it daintily in a little aluminium saucepan over her own fire, and sent him to the sideboard to bring out pots of jam and preserved ginger and a box of biscuits, guessing that the schoolboy era was still near enough for the sweet things to suit his taste, despite the just-lighted cigarette he had sacrificed at the altar of good manners as they crossed the street.

"Do you know, Mrs. Wheeler," he said presently, as they sat chatting over the simple meal—he unfolding his mind to her with an ease and intimacy which might have impressed him even more had he been introspective enough to be aware of it—"I've never felt so much at home even in 'Old Good's' study, where I've belonged for years and years, as I do here where I've only been this once. Isn't it queer?"

She smiled and a little blush tinged her pallor, and her blue eyes, set in a network of tiny wrinkles, grew almost young-looking.

"I hope you will come again."

"I will—you bet—if you will ask me."

"When shall it be then?"

Ultimately it ended in an arrangement that he should eat his Christmas dinner with her next day, and at that dinner their intimacy progressed so well that he began to tell her some of the discomforts of his present life in dreary lodgings, and so the way was opened to many changes for them both.

"I am glad you told me about that," said Mary Wheeler, and her eyes, watching his young face, grew warm in such a way that, had it not been a ridiculous idea, young Billy Osbaldistone would have been obliged to believe that she was already a little fond of him, and though he had not vanity enough to think that, he was still pleasantly conscious of her approval and felt himself a little higher in his own esteem, a little more anxious not to sink below his own best ideas of how a man should carry himself because of it. "You see, I am very comfortable here, but I haven't enough to do, I think—my life has not been a very happy one." She hesitated, and for a moment sat with her lips pressed together and something very like tears dimming the blue light of her eyes, so that sudden rage against circumstances, Fate, or whatever the thing might be that had wounded her, broke the young man's inward calm. "What I should love would be to take a little house and have two or three boarders, young people like yourself. I would make my own life happy looking after them all and——" she broke off laughing at herself. "That is just a castle in the air."

"When it comes true, may I be one of the lucky boarders?" asked young Osbaldistone, walking into the trap she had laid for him with positive eagerness.

"Do you really mean it? Would you care to come? If you would, I shouldn't be afraid to start the boarding-house now."

So the matter settled itself, and out of what was apparently just a chance meeting that Christmas Eve, when young Osbaldistone stood wondering what to do with himself and inclining very much towards sinking his ideals of conduct in favour of a "lark" with a black-haired girl under a lamp-post, all sorts of far-reaching consequences began to grow. First of all, the new house had to be taken, and Mrs. Wheeler chose it entirely with a view to Billy Osbaldistone's convenience, pointing out when he demurred



"He started, looked round, and mechanically raised his hat"—*p.* 125.

Drawn by W. Reynolds.

that of course he was not the only young man whose work took him to that particular suburb, and that she had merely used his requirements as a guide in choosing a situation. In the matter of furnishing she consulted his taste, with the result that he admired everything that she suggested, and spent his Saturday afternoons in happy absorption nailing pictures up and carpets down, and doing warfare upon the weeds and tin cans which ornamented the small back garden.

The end of January found them settled in the chosen house and young Osbaldistone writing rapturous accounts of his new lodgings and his new landlady to his father out in India.

"I have the biggest bedroom in the house—though I told her she ought to have kept it for herself—and a ripping little sitting-room on the ground floor of my very own—in case I want to study. It really makes me feel that I'll try for 'Institute of Bankers' after all. She charges me the same as they did at the other rotten place, only I haven't to tell the other boarders that when they come along, because, of course, she says they will have to pay more, only I was the first, and 'First come, first served.' I tell you, Pater, she's a perfect brick and such a lady."

Over these letters old Osbaldistone, who chose them first out of all that the English mail brought him, often shook his head. Old Osbaldistone was a business man; twenty-five years of India had not taken the keenness from his Yorkshire intellect if it had filled out his tall frame more abundantly than Nature seemed to have intended for him. "Something for nothing" was a form of barter in which he had no belief, but what his son was giving his new landlady in exchange for so many substantial benefits he could not discover—he had artfully inquired whether she had any daughter, and Billy had unsuspectingly answered in the negative by the next mail. The thing vaguely worried him. Evidently Billy was very happy, there seemed no slightest ground of excuse for ordering him to leave this home which had so marvellously been created to shield him from the perils which beset a young man beginning life in a great city and of which parents are so well aware, and the cruel loneliness which is so seldom taken into account and which, perhaps, lies at the root of the whole matter. Clearly he could not order Billy to leave his new lodgings—he even doubted whether Billy would have obeyed a command which must seem to him so unreasonable—and yet he was afraid. Old Osbaldistone had toiled and sweated through the last dozen years with a definite end in view. He was "going home" one of these days when he had made enough money and had sold his business advantageously, and he and his son were going to live together, which was one of the reasons why Billy had been placed in the somewhat unexigent if unremunerative position of a bank clerk. The fear that underlay all the elder man's anxiety as to Mrs. Wheeler's intentions towards his son was that perhaps when he did come home at last someone else might have crept into the place in his boy's regard which, with a fine indifference to probability, he expected to find waiting for him, though he had seen him for two months at a time twice in a dozen years. He comforted himself sometimes with the fact gathered indirectly from Billy's letters that Mrs. Wheeler was not very young, and yet again to a business man in a world where youth is or seems often to be a marketable quality to be worn by those who can afford to buy it, and strange things happen, and forty is not old to a man of forty-nine, and, properly accoutred, may not seem old to eighteen . . .! He did not follow the thought in so many words to its conclusion, but he began to wonder whether he could not arrange to "go home" a few years earlier than he had hoped to after all.

Christmas Eve came again, and again Billy Osbaldistone was in that same busy street where he had stood wondering what on earth he was to do with himself a year before, but he was not, apparently, in any doubt upon that point now, for he was hurrying homewards at his best pace with a tall, white parcel wrapped in florist's paper in his arms—a parcel that seemed to require careful handling. It was a fresh night, if not a real Christmas Eve, with frost and snow, but Billy Osbaldistone did without an overcoat, walked briskly, held his shoulders square, and had neither a thought nor a glance to spare for the picking up of a chance acquaintance. This time he was in London from choice. Phelps had invited him down to the Herefordshire farm, the

usual cordial welcome had been offered to him by his old headmaster, and there had been other invitations, but he had refused them all without much regret, since acceptance would have meant leaving Mary Wheeler to spend her Christmas alone. He did not know quite what it was that she had done for him—that at the moment when his unformed nature, thrown upon the world like a boat suddenly left adrift, was ready to float upon the current, to go the easiest way wherever it might lead, she had taken the helm in her kind hands and had guided him into the track of the fresh wind that would carry him to the harbour of a sturdy, unspoiled manhood—but he knew that he was grateful to her, that he loved her dearly in a fashion reserved for her alone. In his heart of hearts he was sometimes a little inclined to dread the day to which he had once looked forward when the father he scarcely knew might come back to England and expect him to abandon the new home life which she had made for him. That vague fear had often been with him of late since his father's letters had dwelt more often and more fully upon his plans for that long-talked-of return. Billy had told Mrs. Wheeler all about it, because it seemed dishonourable to keep it to himself, and he could see that the idea had troubled her too. He was pondering the matter now, and, as he turned into his own street, coming to the conclusion to which his reflections invariably led him.

"The Pater and she will just have to like each other," he was saying to himself. "If he doesn't take to my idea of both of us boarding in her house, anyhow they must be friends and she must come to us for Christmas every year. Hang it all, she shan't be left alone if I can help—— I beg



"He blundered into the arms of an elderly gentleman who had been standing round the corner"—*p.* 130.

Drawn by W. Reynolds.

your pardon!" and his meditations ended abruptly and very much as might have been expected, in apology, since, engrossed in them, he had blundered straight into the arms of an elderly gentleman in a monstrous overcoat who had been standing on the side-walk just round the corner.

"Here, you—what, Billy my boy!" cried the elderly gentleman, and young Osbaldistone stared for a moment with his mouth open, and nearly dropped the white paper parcel from the florist's and said with a gasp:

"Oh, Pater, is it really you? What a surprise! When did you come?"

Of course, after that there was great handshaking between the father and son, and on Billy's side a curious sense of familiarity, because his father with his brick-red, well-cut face, his shrewd, grey eyes and his tall, stout figure was so little altered since he last remembered him; and on old Osbaldistone's part a feeling of strangeness and bewilderment, since into this brown-skinned, broad-shouldered young man, who was taller even than he was himself, the lanky, hazel-eyed, lethargic schoolboy whom he had known on his last visit to England had merged so wonderfully that he recognised him and yet felt that he was not the same person even in character.

"You're a man, Billy boy," said his father, and Billy, catching a glimpse of what was in his father's eyes, laughed and reddened.

"Come along in, Pater, and let me introduce you to my Mrs. Wheeler—we've often talked about you! Why didn't you tell me you were coming?"

"I fixed it suddenly—had a good chance to clear out and I thought I would give you a surprise."

"Well, you've done that and no mistake. Come along and give Mrs. Wheeler one too!"

His father hesitated in a fashion that puzzled him.

"That was one of my intentions, Billy, but, as a matter of fact"—he resisted the young, impetuous hand on his arm that urged him down the street—"I wanted to ask you, Billy, face to face first of all, why that woman does so much for you?"

Young Osbaldistone frowned at the form of the question, but he was as sweet-tempered as a thoroughly healthy person generally is and answered without impatience: "She isn't a woman, at least—not a 'that woman,' Pater, she's a lady and she's been as good to me as a mother."

"But why?"

The young man stared and grew red again.

"I suppose she's fond of me. I know I'm fond of her."

"I thought it was that." The elder Osbaldistone spoke wrathfully.

"You thought what was what?"

"That she had taken a fancy for you, that there was something more than lodger and landlady in the matter."

Years in a hot climate had not left the father's temper untouched and at its best it had never been so sweet as the son's. This confirmation of his worst fears woke a wrath in him that left him purple and out of breath, but even in his anger he could still see how the young face, staring into his own, grew rigid, and the honest, hazel eyes expressed nothing but a hurt surprise. He stammered in his turn.

"The lady may be all you say, Billy, but she's done a lot for you and people want their *quid pro quo*. I want to know what she is expecting to get—see? I'm not going to blame you, Billy, whatever the tangle is, for you're only a boy, and heredity might make it hard for you to avoid playing the fool if anyone gave you half a chance, only I want to see with my own eyes and hear with my own ears how the land lies between you."

"I don't understand what you are driving at." Young Osbaldistone made a helpless gesture. "If she had been my own mother——"

"Yes, I quite appreciate all that. It may all be true as far as you know and still you may be mistaken where she is concerned; anyhow, the truer it is the less you need object to giving me my own way in the matter. You have a latchkey?"

"Yes."

"Very well, we'll go in quietly and you can have an interview with her in my presence. I suppose we could arrange things so that she would not know that I was there?"

"Would not know that you were there? Do you mean to spy on her?"

"Call it that if you like," said the elder Osbaldistone sulkily.

"Very well!" The young man led his

father on; all the glow of welcome, all the pleasant sense of kinship had died in him, smothered under a feeling of intolerable injury. He was not to know how a suspicion, brooded over through many a lonely day and night, had become almost an obsession to a man who had once been cruelly disappointed in his dearest dream of human nature; he only knew himself and the woman he reverenced insulted beyond the limits of even filial forbearance. His newly conscious efforts to hold fast the best side of life made the insult all the harder to bear.

"I will show him that he's made a great mistake," he said to himself. "And after that I'll tell him what I think of him. He can stop my allowance if he likes, but I'll never live with him after this."

Grimly he ushered his father into the house and led the way, while the elder Osbaldistone followed on tip-toe into the little room at the back which Mary Wheeler had fitted up as a study for her first and favourite boarder. There was a bright fire on the hearth, one big, comfortable arm-chair, a strong table, a litter of books and papers upon it, on the walls tennis racquets and a cricket bat and holly sprays stuck behind the pictures.

"Where can I hide?" asked the father in a whisper, and the son thought him ridiculous.

"I will go out into the hall to meet her — no, we can move the screen round a little and you can get behind it if you want to." He pointed with a contemptuous hand to the Japanese screen arranged to break the draughts from the door, and when his father had duly taken cover behind it rang the bell and told the little maid who answered it to ask her mistress if she would kindly come and speak with him.

In a few moments the sound of Mary Wheeler's skirts, for she wore dresses of a dignified but far from modern period, came rustling along the tiled hall and she stood in the doorway with the lamp light full on



"He reached out eager, impulsive hands towards hers, but she went back from him"—*p.* 132.

Drawn by W. Reynolds.

her broad, calm forehead under its parted hair, on the patient mouth, and on the blue eyes looking so tenderly at the big young man who loomed like a giant silhouetted between her and the red-shaded lamp.

"You wanted to speak to me, Mr. Billy," she said, and he, too acutely conscious of the listener behind the screen, remained dumb and ashamed, not knowing what it would be best and most convincing to do and say.

With the unconscious ease which was part of her character and of which something had even come to him in the impressionable year which he had spent with her, Mary Wheeler stepped into the room and so coming within the ring of stronger light around the lamp saw the package Billy had set down upon the table with such careless haste that the wrapping the florist had put around it had fallen aside and a tall, white Madonna lily full of blossom stood revealed.

"How beautiful!" She spoke with a quickly drawn breath of pure joy in its loveliness and laughed at herself a moment afterwards. "What a treasure though, so pure and white it will make your room like an altar." Billy, all too conscious of a screen standing very much out of its place, was mutely thankful for the direction the conversation was taking. "I don't believe that you will be able to smoke, however much you want to, while that is here."

"But it isn't for here—it is for you!"

"For me? Ah, you mustn't spend your money on me, though it was kind of you to think of it."

"But it is for you. I bought it for you. I know you don't like presents, but I thought you wouldn't mind taking just a flower from me." In his eagerness he had forgotten now the unseen listener. He stooped with his hand upon the table so that his face was near to hers, the lily between them in the rays of the lamp.

"Have you remembered," he went on, and something made his voice not quite steady, "it is a year to-day since you spoke to me, such a wretched, uncertain, uncomfortable sort of fellow? I'm not much now, but all the good there ever is in me will be due to you. You gave me a home, you showed me all the wrong ideas I was getting about everything. I brought you this lily because it was so pure and white—it is the lily that's always in pictures of the Madonna, isn't it? Somehow it reminded me of you."

He remembered his father's presence as he stopped speaking, gave a little start and wondered whether he had been well or ill advised in so forgetting and so speaking out what was in his heart. Through his anxiety it presently struck him as strange that Mrs. Wheeler was so long in answering him. She was looking down at the lily very intently and presently he saw that a tear drop lay in one of its petals like dew and another fell beside it.

"You're crying," he said. "What's the matter?"

She turned away from him, hiding her face in her hands, but he saw the great sobs shaking her and spoke again.

"What is the matter? Have I hurt you in any way?" He put his big hand upon her shoulder in his eagerness and quite suddenly she faced him, looking into his eyes while the unnoticed tears streamed down her cheeks.

"I shall have to tell you, Billy. I never meant to, but I can't help it any more. Don't you remember your mother at all—not ever so faintly?"

He hesitated, wondering what the listener would think of this.

"I don't think so, Mrs. Wheeler. I suppose she died when I was very little."

"But she didn't die."

"What do you mean?" Certainly his father was having something to attend to now.

"She didn't die. Your father and I separated. Billy, Billy, don't you understand? I'm your mother!"

He stared at her, forgetting everything but this that she had told him. Then:

"My mother!" he cried, and reached out eager, impulsive hands towards hers, but she went back from him a step or two with her face white and a strange little moaning cry upon her lips.

"Don't, Billy, don't—not yet. It came to me when you gave me the lily that you'd got to hear it all and judge for yourself, only it is so much to tell you in such a hurry. I was very young when I was married, dear, younger than you are now and silly and extravagant and foolish, and I didn't even take good care of you when you came and I flirted—nothing more, but your father didn't seem to believe that—it was in India, you

know, where things are all so different and I was led away into foolishness and so we quarrelled. Just then I had some money left me and I ran away from him and came home. I was sorry before I got to England, but it was no use being sorry. He is a very just man, dear, but sometimes just a little hard, and he would not forgive me and let me come back, though I begged him and I longed for my baby then and for him all the time. I suppose the pain of it made me a grown-up woman at last. When he sent you to England I found out the school where you were, and I used to go there and sit behind you and the other boys in church sometimes and get just a look at you and cry to have you in my arms, and when you came to London I came too. Last Christmas Eve when I was watching you in the street I saw how left to yourself you were, how likely to fall into bad company. I made myself speak to you, but I never meant to let you know. Billy, Billy, tell me you could give me that white flower still, that you haven't stopped loving me because of all this long-ago silliness."

She was pleading to him now, and the young man took her in his arms and buried his face against her shoulder.

"I've wanted you all my life," he said in a broken voice, and she soothed him, stroking his dark head with a trembling hand.

"I shall lose you when your—father comes back," she said presently, "but, Billy, I have had such a happy year."

"Indeed you won't lose me," said her son, suddenly grown much older and quite composed.

"Ah, Billy, that was why I was afraid to tell you—I shall wish that you had never known if you turn against him. He has been very good to you, he has kept you and educated you all these years and——"

"And you have loved me and understood me and wanted me. I tell you I can't forgive him for the way he treated you."

She sighed and smiled.

"You can't guess what it means to me, dear, to feel that you don't doubt me, that my own dear son loves me and trusts me utterly and yet I can't let you blame your father. I have never stopped loving him, you see, Billy dear. You will go to him when he wants you, promise me."

"But he is here—he has come already."

She uttered a little exclamation of dismay.

"Mary, will it do if I come to you instead?"

A strange voice spoke the words from



"The Japanese screen was pushed aside, revealing an elderly gentleman"—*p.* 134.

behind them, and as the mother turned, clinging to her son, the Japanese screen by the door was pushed aside, revealing an elderly gentleman, very red-faced either from stooping or for some other reason.

"Fred!" she cried, and took a step towards him. "Ah, Fred," and she would have fallen, but before her son had realised it her husband had put his great arm round her and drew her face against his breast.

"If I beg your pardon on my knees, Mary, may we forget these wretched years?"

"But you—you believe me now that I was yours—always?"

He nodded with his mouth compressed, his chin quivering with the effort of self-control, and she raised her head, looked for a long moment into his keen eyes, then smiled and kissed his trembling mouth.

Billy Osbaldistone slipped out into the hall and sat down on the stairs outside the closed door of the study. Regarded as parents both his father and his mother were somewhat strangers to him, and he, though young in emotion, realised that they must need a little time together, after seventeen years of separation, without even his presence. However, he was waiting for them when at last they came out of the study arm in arm and seized them and drew them both under the hall lamp where the mistletoe hung.

"Isn't he a great fellow?" said his father.

"And such a dear boy," said his mother.

"And such a lucky one," said the son, and to relieve the tension of the moment he bent his dark head over the two grey ones and kissed them both under the mistletoe.



Mary's Well, Nazareth.

Photo by D. McLeish.

As this is the only spring the village possesses, it is practically certain that the Child Jesus and His mother were once among its regular frequenters.



By FRANK ELIAS

MR. HORNER-GREEN rose gingerly to his feet and shivered. Then, noiselessly, he crept over the soft Turkey pile towards the window. Presently, however, he remembered something, turned about, stretched a hand to the wall, pressed a button, and extinguished the electric light. The room was now in a darkness broken only by the red, comfortable glow from the wide, easy grate. Reaching the window at last, Horner-Green was again troubled by a shivering fit, but the purpose on which, apparently, this elderly and sedate individual had set out he now developed with infinite caution, and amid an interminable series of shivers of every degree of violence he raised a fraction of a corner of the blind.

The scene without was as still as could be imagined: white and firm lay the snow, presaging a Christmas typical of other decades than ours. But it was not upon the snow that the distended eye of Horner-Green alighted. No; firmly, but very fearfully, he looked up, scanning such of the sky as could be seen, with a dread that might have been observed, even in the firelight.

"At—at any time—any moment, they may come and drop their bombs perhaps even on my early tulip bed—and life isn't worth living without a Christmas! If only one could have lived in those good old times of which we have heard—the times before the world was cursed with inventions, before man's ingenuity had poisoned happiness! One could do very well without railways and other so-called modern conveniences if one were asked to do so. But, no! here one is, cast in the twentieth century—to live a life not worth living, with a Zeppelin bomb to put an end to one's miserable existence. A merry Christmas!" he concluded derisively.

He shivered again, let down the blind with infinite circumspection, and crept back to his chair, where, still very uneasily, he tried to settle his certainly quaking form. But his mind was still busy with thoughts of the past.

"If only those good old Christmas times *could* come back!" he sighed, his eye upon the dying embers in the big grate. But at that moment some sound from without seemed to reach his ear, for he started, sprang irresolutely to his feet, and began once more fearfully to approach the window. Then his intention appeared to change, for he looked and turned doorwards. In the cold and darkened hall he paused again, sighing a little for his forsaken fireside, but he walked boldly to the front door. Finally, with much determination, yet as silently as possible for fear of waking the household, he pulled back the bolts, withdrew the catch, and looked out upon the snow-covered street, seeking

for a cause for the sound he had heard, and hoping for sight of a policeman with whom he could exchange human words. He was even prepared to bestow a Christmas box. But though he could discern neither sign of disturbance nor representative of the law, he did find his interest suddenly aroused.

It seemed ridiculous, and was perhaps to be accounted for by the presence of snow, but he felt certain that the street had narrowed. The night was fairly clear, certainly, and unlighted as was the street he could easily distinguish the outline of the houses opposite. He had never realised before how exiguous was the roadway, and the discovery so excited his curiosity that before he knew what he was doing he was down the steps and in the street.

But no sooner had he taken a step forward than he found his foot sinking into a foul and but half-frozen gutter, from which now emanated, as the result of the disturbance caused by his foot, an odour so overwhelming that he turned sharply towards his own doorway again.

"Shall certainly write to the sanitary authorities—abominable scandal," he began to mutter, conscious by now that his foot was not only beslimed but very wet and cold. "Let me only get to my desk——"

He sprang hastily forward and promptly got his second shock. Here was White Street, Westminster, but where on earth was his house? The houses in front of him looked for all the world like old Stuart or Georgian mansions. This, then, could not be White Street. In his haste he must have found his way into some street unknown to him! Rapidly he ran to the corner. The Embankment should be thereabouts, he knew, but the moon had passed under heavy clouds by this, and the street seemed in almost complete darkness. "Thought they kept *some* lights going," muttered Horner-Green; but look though he might, he could discover no sign either of electric light standard or of incandescent gas lamp. In a moment or two he was positively groping his way and incidentally discovering that beneath the snow the way was very rough.

"Never encountered such a road: can't conceive how the Westminster Council allows these great ruts and cobbles in the middle of the streets," he cried, as for the seventh time he floundered out of a hole that reached above his ankle.

"It's this war, I suppose. Fatuous notions of economy. War ought to be hurried to conclusion. *Would* be if everybody was serving. *I'd* make everybody serve."

"So would *I*, master. Shiver my timbers if I wouldn't!" cried a cheerful voice from somewhere near by. Horner-Green had a notion that he had reached a point near the river. The nautical phrase seemed appropriate, if confusing.

"I wish, my good fellow," began Horner-Green in his best club manner, peering before him at a large, scarce outlined figure, "I wish you'd show me the best way out of this."

"Oh, yes, I'll show you, master, and so will my mates. We'll show you a very handsome way out. A bit old," he now added in an audible whisper to someone behind, "but game enough, I dare say, and looks hearty. And anyhow, Nelson don't ask questions, and the gentleman has told us that everybody should serve. Why, *he'll* hardly be a pressed man!"

"I don't know what you are talking about, my man," began Horner-Green with some acerbity. "Have the goodness to direct me upon my way."

"Oh, we'll direct you, master," cried the big man, taking a stride forward and seizing this well-known clubman and light of the "United Politics" Club by an arm, at the same time slapping him on the back.

"Unhand me, you scoundrel!" cried the irate clubman.

"Unhand ye? Not till I've handed ye over, my hearty!"

"Handed me over?" repeated Horner-Green. "To whom, pray?"

"To our bo'sun, of course. To ship you aboard and make a tar of you."

"Do you mean to tell me," cried the modern, beginning dimly to realise, "that you have the outrageous impudence to press any person into the service of the King? You seem to think that you're living in pressgang days. Things like that may have suited Nelson's time, but——"

"Here, stow all that, master," cried one of the men, growing impatient. "If you're simple, we can't help that. These *be* Nelson's times—let me learn you that much—didn't I serve myself with the little admiral five years since? You come along quietly, now." The last words came threateningly.

"Quietly? Not I! I'll protest against this outrage as long as I have breath."

"Then stop breathing so much for a bit," cried a sailor from behind suddenly, and with that Horner-Green was aware for a moment of something descending. The next second he had almost lost consciousness beneath the blow of a heavy stick. He had a feeling, nevertheless, that they were now in some thoroughfare whose faintly

crowd swept round the corner, and before Horner-Green knew it his prostrate form was surrounded by protecting arms. Denunciations were showered upon the press-gang, who, in concern for their own lives, began quickly to slip away, being but ten against a hundred.

In another moment Horner-Green, opening his eyes, found himself surveyed by the flushed and angry and—now that the



"'I'll protest against this outrage as long as I have breath.'"

Drawn by H. M. Brock.

illumined shops yet gave enough light to cast up from the snow a glitter sufficient to make faces discernible.

He could now but faintly distinguish voices, but there did come to him one remark of his assailant, who evidently believed his prey was quite lost to the world.

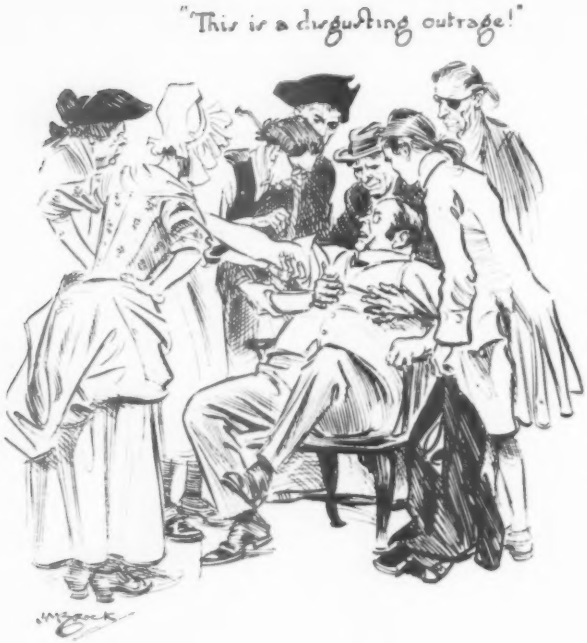
"We'll have to carry him or get a barrow, I'm thinking," he was saying, when a sudden tumult rose from the neighbouring street. The next moment a disorderly

chief enemy had been drawn away—none too sympathetic faces of a crowd of dishevelled men and women.

"The master's been hit," cried one.

"Do him no harm. But wherever was he tailored?" cried another, surveying the twentieth century clothing which graced Horner-Green's elderly form; whereupon there was much inconsiderate merriment.

Horner-Green would have liked to protest and tell them that his tailor was the



best in Bond Street, but a dazed feeling still possessed him, and when he tried to move he found he did so with difficulty.

Just in front of him he had seen standing under a flickering shop lamp a tall, angular woman with a red, flushed face and a determined manner. He had been conscious of her eye, and had tried to avoid it; but now he became certain that she was meditating something.

"The master's ill," she cried suddenly. "He's been hit. Pick him up, and to the barber's with him!"

"Barber's!" protested the unhappy wretch upon the ground, as he felt strong arms grasping him in obedience to the virago's doubtless kindly meant suggestion. "I don't want any—er—hairdresser. I only allow my hair to be cut by my own man in my own way. I don't want——"

"You want cupping, master—*that's* plain!" cried the woman, sweeping the men onward with her hand; and in another moment poor Horner-Green was raised upon his feet, swept down the pavement and finally thrust into a shop over which rested the well-known pole once symbolic of the surgical art.

In a trice his coat was off, his sleeve up, and under the gaze of a dozen pairs of eyes our clubman's arm was grasped by two none too clean hands, one of which then proceeded to apply a lancet.

"Here!" yelled Horner-Green, fully conscious at last. "This is a disgusting outrage—as ignorant in its conception as—Here, unhand me, you blackguard!"

"The poor fellow can't help it, barber—he's that ill," broke in the woman who had organised the bleeding of Horner-Green.

"I—I'll help *you* when I get out," roared the victim, who, in spite, perhaps because, of his head, was now in a furious passion. "Let me go, you beastly lot of illiterates."

He struggled so hard that at last he did succeed in breaking away from his tormentors and reaching the door.

"A taxi!" he yelled. "Get me a taxi! Somebody get me a taxi, and I'll give him a shilling."

A big crowd which had accompanied him to the door of the barber's, but could not enter, stood outside now and greeted his appearance with jeers, which were increased on hearing his unintelligible demand.

Finally, however, it occurred to somebody that what the gentleman wanted was some form of conveyance. The alert person, eager for the shilling, swiftly quitted the shop, and a moment later returned to announce that "what master asks for is waiting."

Flinging a shilling to the man, Horner-Green, his arm bleeding and his head aching furiously, made for the door. Here, however, to his astonishment, no less than his dismay, he perceived in the light from the open door a curious contrivance like a Piccadilly newspaper kiosk with handles.

"What's—what's this?" he cried. But ere he could add other words, two men, in charge of what they called their "chair,"

had run forward, seized what they supposed to be their willing "fare" by the arms, and conducted him at a run to the door of their conveyance. The next moment the struggling Horner-Green was inside and being carried off.

Realising, however, that he had at least been provided with a means of escape, he said nothing.

"I suppose my messenger could find nothing in the way of a taxi—I believe a good many have been sent to the front—but really I didn't know we'd been reduced to sentry boxes or newspaper kiosks for conveyance. I shall certainly write one of my *Times* letters on the subject."

While our clubman thus reflected the conveyance was being swiftly carried away from the dimly lighted thoroughfare, and when he looked out it was to discover that he was in complete darkness. In a few minutes, too, he began to notice that nothing once broke the silence.

"Where *can* I be?" he exclaimed despairingly. "I recognise nothing outside. It can't be Regent Street nor Oxford Street, but surely I should hear *some* sounds of traffic, snow or no snow."

He was about to fling down the window, remembering suddenly that in his anxiety to get away from the barber's he had given no address to his bearers, when the men came suddenly to a halt and threw down the chair.

"We can't take you no further, master," said one, flinging open the door. "Snow's too bad."

This fresh shock almost took the breath away of the poor fare. Was this some evil nightmare, or could there be a place—or a time—where things were so bad? Suddenly he remembered his cosy fireside, and his sigh for "the good old times." Could his wish have come true? But the thing was ridiculous. Someone was playing a joke on him.

"It's monstrous," cried Horner-Green. "Take me to the Imperial Club this minute, or I don't pay a sou."

"Oh, you'll pay, master," answered the other, with impudent confidence. "It's only three crowns that we're asking, in spite of the weather."

"Three crowns! Fifteen shillings! Where's the taximeter—show me that!" yelled Horner-Green, forgetting for the moment that his demand could not be satisfied.

The men could make no more of his words than could the people at the barber's, but that did not seem to trouble them in the least, they knew precisely what *they* wanted.

"Fifteen shillings, master. Pay now, and perhaps we'll find a way to the place you speak of—for a further fee; otherwise—well——"

But while yet they threatened, one of them stopped, listened, looked round, and then, with a cry, took to his heels, the other following, just as something appeared within the narrow arc of the light of the flickering lamp, which still struggled for existence at the side of the chair.

For the moment Horner-Green could not understand. A man seemed to be there, but—where was his face? Why did he wear a veil—and why had the others fled? Was this a fancy-dress ball, a trick, or——



"Why, of course—a rescue!" cried Horner-Green to himself. "They heard the approach of the—er—police. But *is* it the police? I—I say!"

The man came a step nearer, but still kept silent, and made no sign other than extending something quietly in his right hand.

For a moment Horner-Green glared at the thing uncertainly. Then, his heart turning cold, he recognised the ugly nose of a pistol, and, as if to confirm his newest and most awful fears, a voice spoke:

"YOUR MONEY OR YOUR LIFE!"

"I—I—what is this game? Oh, yes, Christmas merriment—quite so—quite so—a little juvenile, perhaps, but still forgivable—though wouldn't you be better, my good man, serving your King and country at the front than—er—playing practical jokes—ahem!—upon the respectable public?"

There was a moment's pause.

"No joke," answered the other laconically. "Your money or your life!" And the pistol came a little closer. "Come, hand it over; I don't want to kill another man to-night." The pistol's nose was now perilously near to Horner-Green.

"I—I shall call the police," said the clubman, his teeth chattering all the same. "I—I won't be threatened. I never heard of such an outrage—and in the twentieth century, too!"

The man stared at him in a strange way.

"If you don't even know your century, old feller, you're not fit to have money loose," he broke in. "Come, once more, your money or—I can't wait—your life!"

"Here! Police! Police!" cried Horner-Green, suddenly springing to his feet.

There was a sudden explosion, a crash, and Horner-Green was lying on the floor in front of a red fire, while beside him lay the fragments of the vase which he had swept from the table in his fall.

Sitting up, he looked round the room, and his eye almost at once alighted upon an almanac—

"1915!" He read slowly, in confusion. "And so it *is* the twentieth century, after all! Well, well," with a sigh, "perhaps, wars notwithstanding, I must come to the conclusion that I—we don't approve of the *so-called*"—this with a magnificent emphasis—"good old times."



WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN?

You have purchased this Christmas Double Number of THE QUIVER partly, of course, for your own interest and enjoyment, and I am sure you will be well repaid. But what about the children? They, too, would enjoy a Christmas Number of their own. LITTLE FOLKS Christmas Number (price 6d.) is a perfect mine of pleasure for all children from six to sixteen. It contains ten beautiful coloured pictures and a host of stories, verses and illustrations. In its new form, LITTLE FOLKS has been received with universal delight. No boy or girl should be allowed to miss the Christmas Number.



'We wander off for a tramp in the snow, and find ourselves in a quiet lane off Barfreston.'

IN HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS

By P. H. Ditchfield, M.A., F.S.A.

WITH NINE ILLUSTRATIONS
PHOTOGRAPHED IN COLOUR
DIRECT FROM NATURE

BY

H. Essenhigh Corke, F.R.P.S. F.R.H.S.

"To one who has been long in city pent,
'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven—to breathe a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament."

—KEATS.

A. OVERNELL

IN HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

With Nine Illustrations photographed direct from Nature by the "Lumière" Autochrome process.

"Lord, who would live turmoiled in the court
And may enjoy such quiet walks as these?" —SHAKESPEARE.

OH! the call of the country! Ye townsfolk, who does not know it? It has inspired many a song. The long grey road stretching far over hill and dale, and, better still, the soft green turf of the byway, the springy moss upon the moor, the breezy downland, and the murmur of the stream call with seductive voice, and men feel the insatiate longing of the "Wanderlust" and fly to "fresh woods and pastures new."

The highway is never dull and the byway always delightful. Think of all the multitudes of men in whose footsteps you are treading. It is deeply set, this road, the hedge-banks rise on each side, as if a stream had hollowed out its course and worn away the earth, as is not unlikely, and for centuries strings of pack-horses have tramped along it, and wains piled high with corn have cut its surface by their wheels.

Roman legionaries have marched along it, and bearded Saxon warriors bent on slaughter and rapine. Merchants, traders, pilgrims, knights, and monks are among the gay company who travel with us along the great open road.

Farther back still our memory and imagination lead us. Here is a warriors' camp, prehistoric, Roman, Saxon, what you will—you can determine its makers by its shape. It guards the road, as other earthen fortresses do all along its course. Here is a megalithic circle or a solitary stone that has stood sentinel all through the ages since the prehistoric folk, the Neolithic people, reared it, and a huge tumulus preserves their bodies, unless some tiresome and desecrating antiquaries have disturbed the mortal remains that were with such pains preserved.

It is all very well to try to discover the habits and customs of the races which inhabited our islands ages ago; but I like not the ghoulish raking in their tombs, and there is a breath that sounds in my ear like a muttered condemnation, "Cursed be he that moves these bones." Those old people were well skilled in magic and mystery.

Curses hover thickly and dismally over the remains of prehistoric antiquity. A farmer who tries to remove a dolmen in search of treasure suffers. He is unlucky. Perhaps that is the reason why archæologists are such unfortunate people, if they will go on digging into burial mounds and ransacking graves.

But the wayfarer needs no



"A walk of about two miles takes us to Tilmanstone, another charming Kentish village."



"It is one of the most beautiful and finely situated villages in Kent." (Ightham.)

such excitements as he winds his way over hill and dale. Enough for him to see the sun shining on the waters of a mere, the scarlet pomp of a poppy-strewn field of corn, the rich green of the firs, the giant oaks and the silver birch, "the lady of the woods," as Coleridge calls her who when the day declines seems like a ghost and is lit up by the mystic silver of the moon.

Whither?

Highways and byways—whither will they lead us? North or South or East or West? We know not—we care not. Enough for us to have the green turf beneath our feet, and the great arched sky above our heads, going where we list where all things seem beautiful, and the heart is light, and care is left behind in the dull dead region of daily toil. The old road calls. Nature calls, and what is this voice that speaks so clear, so loud? "Nature—art thou the living garment of God? O, Heavens, is it, in very deed, He then that ever speaks through thee; that lives and moves in thee, that lives and moves in me?"*

We will follow Nature in her varying moods, sometimes when she is sad and white and hoar, and everything seems dead and lifeless, and pace the silent gloomy woods where scarce a bird's note is heard, that soon will echo once again with wealth of song. We will watch her robe herself with a wondrous garb and see the wild hyacinth with its myriad blooms, the primrose covered banks, the violets in the grass beside the hedge-side, the cowslips and celandines. We hear again the song of the woodland choristers—

"Far and near
In wood and thicket over the wide grove
They answer and provoke each other's song."

And again, when wearied with the summer glare and oppressed by wealth and store of treasure, Nature prepares to lay aside her beauteous dress, we see her decked in glorious tints that vie with all the rich lavishness of the earlier age. In the wood we witness the gorgeous array, the lovely colour of the oaken leaves, the golden birch: on the common the purple heather-bells are ringing and the many tinted bracken stands lifting its tall head to catch the gradually decreasing glow of autumn sun.

We wayfarers, seeking the old road, will woo Nature in all her moods, seek the cooling covert when the sun is high, drink of the refreshing rivulet, go to the downland where the sheep wander, trace the byways and see whither they will lead us, perhaps to some fair farmstead, where draughts of luscious warm milk fresh from the cow, or horns of good home-brewed ale, refresh us after our pilgrimage. And so we take the road, and see whither it will lead us.

The lure of the South-Eastern corner of Britain has attracted our artist's wanderings, and we must, perforce, go with him. Kent and Sussex are his favourite camping grounds. But it matters not whither the wanderer wends. Everywhere he sees in spring the blue-bells rearing their heads after the primroses have gone to sleep. Everywhere new colours catch his grateful eye and the bracken begins to raise its spiral form and daily spread its strong fronds until it is as high as his head.

Everywhere he may hear the breeze playing through the leaves of the birch, the cuckoo's cheerful call, and the laughing notes of the green woodpecker, the "yaffler," as our Berkshire peasants call the gorgeously plumed bird.

The Garden of England

But Kent, the far-famed garden of England, has a special charm, and you cannot travel far without meeting a pleasant village with a fine old church with its grey tower or graceful spire, speaking with a living voice to the weary wayfarer a cheering *sursum corda*. And Sussex, too, the old kingdom of the South folk, the most unspoilt of all our English shires, has an attraction that is all its own. Till modern times it lay in a pleasant

*Carlyle: "Sartor Resartus."

byway of life, with no main roads running through the county; and so were preserved its old-fashioned manor houses, its quaint half-timbered cottages and farmsteads, its village churches unspoilt by the heavy hands of the restorers.

The South Downs

The region of the South Downs to the town-bred wanderer, with its stretches of uniform hills and hollows, its sparseness of trees, its few inhabitants, seems dull and uninteresting. Dr. William Martin writes that in many a fold and crease in the hills there is yet to be found an old-world hamlet where the spirit of mediævalism still lingers, though perilously threatened by the appearance in its midst of golf-links and the motor-car. The wheels of time grind slowly on the Downland and the folk die of old age. Far away from the shriek of railway whistle and the dust of the highway we wander on.

"With footfall deadened by the springy turf, and with Nature in her brightest mood for a companion, the distant bark of the sheep-dog and the clink-clank from the neck of the bell-wether seem but a fitting break to the prevailing silence. There lie the crescents of darkened herbage, where, in our childish imaginings, dancing fairies tripped a measure, and where the 'pharisees' of our youth, the little people who roamed the hills, held their meetings. We may rest awhile and admire the rolling landscape, with its rich colouring of varied hue, where every grass knoll serves to focus the vision. We may lazily follow the clouds as they cast their fantastic figures upon the green sward and shadow chases shadow across the grassy slopes!"*

Gilbert White, of Selborne, thought the prospect from Plumpton Plain, near Lewes, "equal to anything he had seen in the finest parts of Europe," and though he had travelled the country upwards of thirty years he saw new beauties every time he traversed it. So Sussex can boast of much that is delightful. And it is not all downland. There are stretches of pleasant common, heather-clad, and where the gorse blooms with constant glow, and also hedge-girt fields with arable land and comfortable homesteads.

But we are wooing Nature in her changing moods, and will first capture her when winter comes with its chilly breath, and snow is on the ground and throws her light mantle over all, and frost binds the paths and byways, making them hard and crisp.

It is Christmas Day, and if there is ever a time when the thirst for wandering ceases to have attractions it is the Feast of Christmas. Then home calls with a voice that will be heard, and there must be no wayfaring then. Sweet the church bells sound across the hard fast-bound earth of the park, wafting a message of invitation that no one could refuse. There is rime on the trees that sparkles in the sun as it struggles through the mist, and they look almost as fair as when clad in their gorgeous summer robes. See how each branch and twig stands out against the sky. The peal of the bells has ceased; only one is tolling, reminding us that we must hasten on, or we shall be late. The parson will not wait for us, as his reverend predecessor and the clerk used to do for our sires and refused to begin "When the wicked man . . ." until he had arrived.

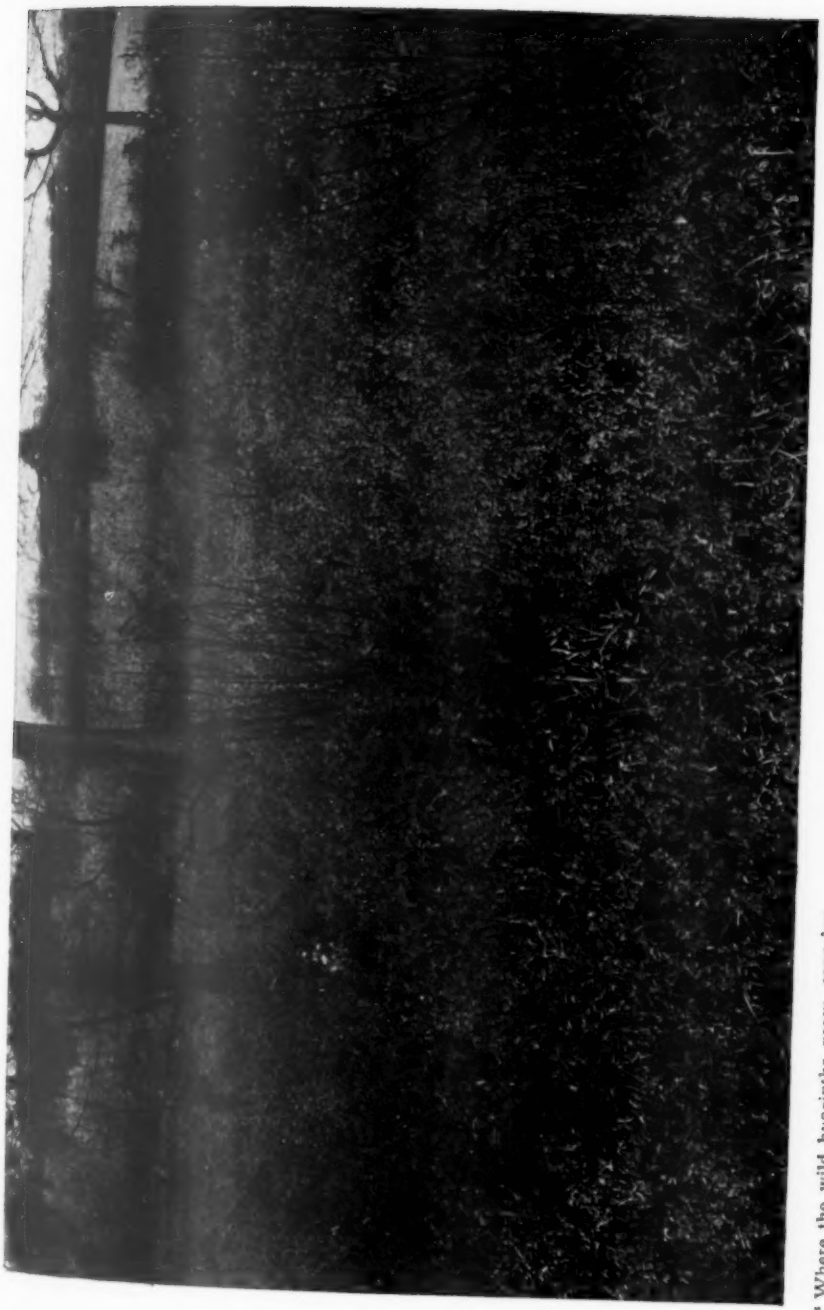
An Old Christmas Service

How different was the service then from what it is to-day! I remember the old clerk, John Egar, with his close-cropped grizzled head and keen grey eyes. He used to stick a branch of holly on the corners of the great box pews, which was the only form of decoration. These box pews are gone, but the squire's pew remains in the south aisle of the chancel, with its chairs and large Prayer Books, and I can remember when I was not tall enough to see over the wooden partition unless I was lifted on to the seat. The old clerk used to march with little jerky steps behind the parson on the way from the vestry. There was a high, three-decker pulpit, and into the reading desk the parson was ushered and the door closed with a snap by the clerk, who took his seat in the lowest deck of the "trireme."

Terrible hymns we used to sing out of Tate and Brady's metrical version of the Psalms, which were announced by the clerk in a squeaky voice, with the familiar words, "Let us sing to the praise and glory of God."

But there was one hymn which was pasted on the inside cover of the Prayer Book, which he gave out as "the hymn on the

* "The Downland," by William Martin, M.A., LL.D., F.S.A., in "Memorials of Old Sussex."



" Where the wild hyacinths grow, covering the ground with a glorious blue."

clodger," that being the vernacular for the cover of a book. The Psalms were read as a duet by the parson and the clerk, whose pronunciation and mistakes were curious, and the music was performed by the village orchestra in the West Gallery. The windows were large and sunny, but the leading was loose in places, causing draughts; so that whilst one lady would put up her umbrella for the sun, the old men carefully folded their red handkerchiefs and put them on the top of their bald heads to keep off the draughts.

Curious time, curious manners! We have changed all that, but the old-fashioned greetings on the Christmas morn are no less hearty than they were of yore, and "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill to men" still moves the hearts of both squire and peasants in spite of the changes time has wrought.

We wander homeward through the village across the park, along a field-path that skirts a wood. Nature seems everywhere asleep. There is a stillness in the air. It may be many eyes are watching us as we pass. A squirrel has just darted up a tree, and from behind its sheltering trunk it looks down upon us as we walk. A rabbit darts past, and down a glade in the wood we see a dog-fox rejoicing in his freedom. He knows quite well—foxes know everything—that hounds and horsemen cannot hurt him in such weather as this. His earth is unstopped, and while this frost lasts he knows he is quite safe; he enjoys his life; rabbits are plentiful; there is a nice henroost not far away, and he is quite ready to have another run for his life when the time comes.

A Tramp in the Snow

In the afternoon we wander off for a tramp in the snow, and find ourselves in the pleasant village of Barfreston, in the county of Kent. A quiet lane opens out before us. It is a veritable byway, with a coppice wood on each side, leading to a house in the distance. There are sheep hurdles on either side of the entrance to the lane. It is a country of pasture and hedges. These hedges are things of antiquity and beauty. People imagine that they only date back to the Inclosure Acts of the 18th century. They are far more venerable. They really date from the 14th century, and Abbot Gasquet has shown that they were the products of the Great Plague. When people died by thousands during the ravages of the Black Death, the form of land tenure and the character of English farming were changed. The common field system was broken up, and the land was divided, and to mark the new boundaries hedges were planted. From that day to this hedges have existed in the same places and on the same spots in old Barfreston.

A Peaceful Rural Scene

It is a very peaceful rural scene, the view of this charming Kentish village, and the bell is tolling in the grand old church of Barfreston. The Norman builders raised it about 800 years ago, and it is a gem of architectural beauty. The chancel arch is finely proportioned and richly ornamented with chevron and zigzag forms, and on each side there is a smaller arch with decorated heads. The bell we hear is dedicated to St. Katherine and bears the name of the saint, who sends forth her pleading message to the world, a sound that sweetly echoes over the snow-clad ground.

A walk of about two miles takes us to Tilmanstone, another charming Kentish village where the Norman builders have also left us enduring monuments of their skill and art. The snow lies less thickly on the gracefully curving hard road. There is a substantial farmhouse on the left, and the village pond, the ice on which is scarcely yet thick enough to support the rustic skater or the boys who love to slide upon its smooth surface. A patient horse well "roughed" is bearing straw for the stable and cowsheds, and the tall dark fir trees contrast with the whiteness of the snow-clad ground. It is a pretty rural scene, very peaceful and still. A robin looks fearlessly at us as we pass, and wonders if the strangers carry food in their pockets for such adventurous spirits as himself, and the sparrows are twittering in the farmyard, always busy, always persistent, and generally successful.

But the sky is again overcast as the closing hours of the brief wintry day draw to an end. Already the snowflakes are beginning to fall, and soon will cast their deep mantle over all. It is time to return to the warm fireside, to home, where on a Christmas night one would ever be. There will be a merry feast for the children, crackers and snap-

dragon and plum-pudding, the flames of which must never die down until the plate reaches its happy recipient. Perhaps the mummers will come with their curious play, faint relic of ancient folk-drama. They will come in their strange garb resembling sheep-skins, save that instead of wool they have coloured paper cut into ribbons. They have frills about their knees and carry wooden swords, except "King George," who usually has an iron one fashioned by the village blacksmith. And then we shall see the gallant English champion strutting forward brandishing his sword and repeating the lines:

"I am King George, that noble champion bold,
And with my trusty sword I won ten thousand pounds in gold;
'Twas I that fought the fiery dragon and brought him to the slaughter,
And by this means I won the King of Egypt's daughter."

It is all very funny. I have seen it performed I know not how many times, and each time I love to see the fight between the "champion bold" and the Turkish knight; and when the latter is slain the "Doctor" attempts to cure him with a great wooden pill, but "Jack Vinny" extracts a tooth, as big as a horse's, and restores the wounded warrior to life. It is very strange and curious. Once the old mummers nearly died out, but I taught some youngsters to say the words, and I hope they will come to-night and do their devoir well.

Out in the Storm

The snow continues to fall, and a mighty cruel north-easter is raging, driving the billows of white dust across the fields, piling it up against every obstacle, pollard, stump, or gatepost, hedgerow, or wall, or farmstead, rolling, eddying, scudding along. Huge drifts are packed up against every little copse or plantation, and not a creature can be seen in the whole expanse of utter desolation. God help poor travellers to-night! It reminds us of the fearful storm thirty-five years ago, when men lost their way and died in the drifts. Fearful is it to trudge along through the blinding snow. It blinds and suffocates and tires you out as you walk. And then the snow spirit whispers seductively in your ear: "You are worn out; why not rest? Here is a quiet spot out of the wind beneath this tangled brake. Rest till the storm has passed. I will keep you warm and snug." And the doomed man lays himself down to sleep and rest; silently the snow covers him, and he wakes again on the Judgment Day.

When the Young Lambs Come

The young lambs come into the world often with the snow that matches their wool. The shepherd is busy in the folds, and the banks of the snow outside his thatched compound keep it snug and warm. A successful lambing time means much to him. Sometimes you may see him walking to and fro under the shelter of a steep bank, or in a bottom, or a combe, while his sheep scrape away the snow with their forefeet to get at the grass. Cold it is on the Downs in such weather, and John Dudeney, most famous of shepherds, remembered that the snow froze into ice on his eyelashes, and that his father breathed on his face to thaw it off. Lonely is the shepherd's lot. Motionless he stands, but erect or just leaning on his crook, with his wallet at his side, and with his dog at his feet looking up at him with that eager look in expectation of a command which sheep-dogs are born with. He used to have his sport in catching wheat-ears, which were a source of wealth to the Downland shepherd, setting springes to catch them in the turf; he searched for plovers' eggs, caught moles, and marked down a hare's nest for the benefit of the harriers when they came to hunt.

As we watch the snowy scene from our windows we see that all bird-life is not dead. The larks fly in flocks, and you can hear their twitter as they sweep along seeking some grassy spot cleared by the wind. We like to see the lark in summer soaring high and pouring forth sweet melody—

"The bonnie lark, companion sweet!
Wi' speckl'd breast,
When upward-springing, blythe, to greet
The purpling East."

But see him also in the cold, frosty days of winter and learn assuredly that summer with its sunshine will return.

It is no great hardship to us country-folk to be snowed up. A country home is self-contained. We have our books and a quiet undisturbed time, and somehow the postman contrives to reach us, and proof-sheets find their way to us. There is much to be done when the snow keeps us prisoners and we hug our fetters.



"A gorgeous field of red poppies in the corn at Shoreham (Kent).
What a wealth of colour rich and rare!"

Nature sleeps and we sleep with it until fair spring comes and her song is heard through the woods and fields and gardens, and awakes to life once more the joyous countryside. It is good to be alive when spring comes and makes amends for the dark and gloomy days that are past, for grey skies and wild boisterous winds. The cuckoo is calling; the brook laughs as it runs and babbles down the side of the hill, and the nightingale has come back to us once more and trills sweetly in the still night hours and scarcely stops when the dawn breaks. Who does not echo Milton's song:

"O nightingale! that on yon bloomy spray
Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still;
Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,
While the jolly hours lead on propitious May.
Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day,
First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,
Portend success in love."

When Spring is Here Again—

We hear one singing in the copse on the other side of the drive, and another sends forth its liquid melodies sitting on the trees of the nut-walk, and another in the wood behind the house, while another sings sitting on the rhododendrons a few yards from my study window, answering and provoking each other's song and sending forth a wondrous harmony of delicious notes, as if

"he were fearful that an April night
Would be too short for him to utter forth
His love-chant and disburthen his full soul
Of all its music."

And the nightingale has others who try to imitate him. There is the thrush that sings all day, and the blackbird has its sweet flute-notes which he pours from that "golden dagger of his bill to fret the jenneting of spring." Our garden is a Paradise of birds. In the combes behind the house they thrive and flourish. In the copses they nest and sing, and the gardener mourns over the destructiveness of sparrows and the greediness of jays, who will not let his peas alone. The fruit trees suffer in the orchard, but the birds repay us by their songs and by their trustfulness and companionship. Our birds are very tame; they fear us not and accept gratefully the alms we offer. As I walk along the bullfinches will not fly away, but just flit on a few paces and then pause to greet me once more. Shy, very shy, are the wood-pigeons who dwell in the tall firs of the wood, and when you walk through it at night there is a continual rustling of wings as they start from their lofty perches at the slightest sound of a strange footstep. The swallow comes and seeks—I like to think—his old nest under the eaves. It is ready for him, though the house was painted last autumn, and the painters wanted to pull down the nests; I ordered them to be spared and kept ready for the swallows, if only the pestilential sparrows will let them alone. There is war in the air between the pugnacious sparrows and the lovely swallows who have travelled from Africa in order to rear their young under our eaves. The sparrows multiply and have the benefit of large battalions, and I fear the victory is for them. I feel inclined to repeat the record in our old churchwardens' account books:

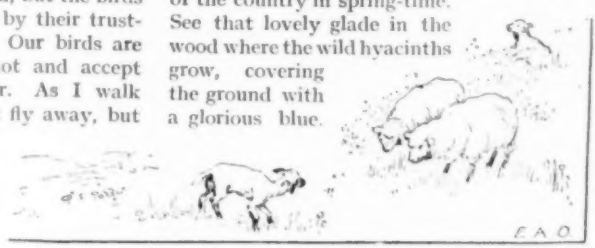
"May 15th, 1804. Paid for catching 60 dozen sparrows, 15s."

There was a great slaughter in 1813, when £2 was paid; in 1815 "maggs" (magpies) were included in the account, which amounted to no less than £2 9s. 4d.; and war was waged against hedgehogs in 1808, which cost 6s. 3d. Fourpence a dozen seems to have been the usual price paid for the killing of sparrows.

—and the Birds are Nesting

I may not count our birds, linnets, starlings (one came down Anthea's bedroom chimney recently and brought with it piles of soot), goldfinches, fly-catchers (there is a pair always about the rock-garden), yellow ammer (no, my critical reader, not yellow hammer, though you will find it so spelt in books and so pronounced by folk who are fearful lest they should be accused of dropping an h). These birds are very stationary; I always know a spot on a certain road where I shall find a pair.

But I must cease to talk of birds, or I shall never tell you of half the delights of the country in spring-time. See that lovely glade in the wood where the wild hyacinths grow, covering the ground with a glorious blue.



Not long ago the primroses were here raising their sweet pale yellow faces to the sky, glad harbingers of spring. Now a mantle of blue is spread and the butterflies love the scene—tortoiseshells, Red Admirals, the Peacocks, and the whites revel amongst the flowers and bask in the sunlight.

The old oak trees are now looking their best, when they are showing signs of renewed vigour and the fresh russet-brown leaves are seen, ere yet the wealth of foliage hides the great part of the contours of trunk and boughs. In our Berkshire woods, the outskirts of the old Windsor Forest, there are

> "hundreds of huge oaks,
> Gnarl'd—older than the thrones of Europe—look
> What breadth, height, strength—torrents of eddying bark!
> Some hollow-hearted from exceeding age,
> and some
> Pillaring a leafy sky upon their monstrous boles."

The Ancient Oak Tree

A wondrous story this battered old tree could tell which sprang from an acorn dropped by its sire in the days of chivalry when the Third Edward reigned, and heard him tell of times when Saxon kings ruled over English land and when under his shade the Hundred Court was held and rude justice administered by the folkmote.

> "Three centuries he grows, and three he stays
> Supreme in state and in three more decays."

Soon the moon of roses dawns, and the common is golden with the ever-blooming gorse, and silver daisies spread themselves over the meadows. The buttercups raise their heads in the pastures, and the cows seem to be standing in a golden lake. Wild flowers attract us wherever we wander, the marsh-marigolds in the water meadows, the blue veronica or bird's-eye with its cerulean petals, the orange-golden dandelion in the green sward, the white wild violet, the meadow orchis, the blue meadow crane's-bill, and the little white chickweed on the garden path. They all scatter blessings of light and colour around them. And look at the gorgeous fields of red poppies in the corn at Shoreham. What a wealth of colour rich and rare is there! Poppies in the corn speak of bad farming or unfavourable soil; but to look on such a field is almost sufficient recompense for a poor crop.

Are you wearied with contemplating Nature's beauties? I trow not; but the eye may grow tired with the contemplation of scenes of sylvan loveliness, and the heart satiated with too much happiness. We will leave the fields and forests for a time, and seek the habitations of man, the quiet restful village wherein human art and skill have contrived to blend their achievements with Nature's handicraft and to produce a constant harmony.

Summer is the time for wandering. Some hasten abroad to other lands, when times are favourable, to explore the beauties of Switzerland or Scandinavia or the architectural treasures of Northern France. Perhaps it would have been better for them to stay at home and try to realise the attractions of their own country. If you learn these, you will not need to go abroad. England has quite as many beauties to offer as any foreign land, especially in its villages. The church dating back to Norman times with its additions erected by the piety of succeeding generations of good Christian folk, the manor house nestling among the trees, the village green with its pond, with reeds and rushes lining its banks—the haunts of moorhens—the farmhouses and cottages of the peasants, combine to form a scene that cannot be rivalled by any we see in other lands. Our country has seldom been ravaged by revolutionary violence. There is a sense of continuity, of the upholding of old habits and customs, of peaceful existence and simple life, which we trust will never be disturbed.

The Most Beautiful Village?

Where shall we look for the more beautiful of our old English villages?

A few years ago the editor of the *Spectator* asked me to write an article for that paper describing the features of an ordinary village with the view of persuading the National Trust for the Preservation of Scenes of Natural Beauty or Historic Interest to acquire by purchase such a village and preserve it from vandalism and destruction.

Modern buildings are intruding themselves amongst the ancient cottages which are sometimes perishing from age and neglect. The spirit of utilitarianism is abroad. Picturesque dwellings, instead of being repaired and made sanitary, are pulled down. Hideous brick cottages with blue slate roofs are erected in their stead, and the appearance of the village is being destroyed. Hence it occurred to Mr. St. Loe Strachey to suggest that a real unspoilt village should



" Bramber, in Sussex, is a perfect model of what an old English village should be."

be bought and preserved and left as an heritage to future generations of Englishmen as a curiosity and as an example of what the country was like in the days of old.

A Few Examples

I was glad to write that article. And then the question arose as to which was the most beautiful village in England and more worthy of preservation. The editor of the *Sphere* took up the quest, and several views of charming examples appeared in that publication. We might charter an aeroplane and visit several of them. In Berkshire none is prettier than the village of East Hendred, with its old houses bowered in trees and retaining thatched roofs with gables and bargeboards, its wayside chapel, Elizabethan farmhouse, noble church and manor house, which has a Roman Catholic chapel that was plundered by the soldiers of William of Orange.



East Hagbourne is a charming village full of half-timber cottages, and having two village crosses and the remains of a third, a favourite haunt of artists. All along the Vale of the White Horse there are unspoilt hamlets that have survived the march of progress.

Across the Thames, in Oxfordshire, there is Garsington unspoilt by the advent of any railway, which has for its chief features an interesting old cross with its Calvary steps, a Norman church, and a well-preserved manor house.

In the same county is Great Tew, one of the prettiest villages in England, with its grey-stone cottages clad with climbing plants.

Wiltshire is, perhaps, the best shire for pure thatch and unspoilt rusticity, though many of its cottages are roofed with tiles and are of half-timber construction. It would be difficult to improve upon the lovely street-view of Potterne with its 15th century cottages, including the famous Porch House, and its fine Early English church.

Castle Combe, in the same shire, has a fine square-roofed market cross with high-pitched gables, some gabled Tudor cottages, and many beautiful old houses of Cotswold stone. An old bridge spans a fine trout stream that runs through the village.

"Black and White" Houses

Herefordshire is famous for its "black and white" houses, which also abound in Shropshire, Monmouth, Worcestershire and Cheshire. Weobley, with its quaint cottages gabled with bargeboards, is almost unrivalled. A typical Dorset village is Okeford Fitzpaine, with its thatched timber-framed houses, grand church, and ancient cross.

Gloucestershire, too, lacks not beautiful villages, especially in the Cotswold district, the region of grey-stone houses, with roofs of slabs or tiles, where the masons have not forgotten the old Gothic style of building. Stanton is a characteristic hamlet that was owned in Elizabethan times by Thomas Dolman, the successor of the great clothier, "Jack of Newbury." He sold various holdings to divers people, who built several Elizabethan and Jacobean houses. A cross stands in the village street. Thomas Warren built a fine 16th century house, carving his initials over the door, "T. W., 1577." Stanton Court, a fine Elizabethan mansion, has fallen into the hands of one who knows well how to appreciate its beauties and who has carefully restored it. On the banks of the Wye opposite Tintern Abbey nestles the little hamlet of Brockweir, beneath the shade of a tree-crowned hill.

Ringwood, in Hampshire, on the Avon, is worth visiting. It is as old as the Romans, and has a fine church and tower built in the Early English style. One day in 1685 the quietude of its street was much disturbed by companies of the King's soldiers bringing in as their prisoner the Duke of Monmouth after his defeat at Sedgemoor.

Going back to our beloved Sussex we see the very charming village of Alfriston, which takes its name from Alfric, a follower of King Alfred, and was known as "Alfric's ton," a typical English hamlet. It has a grand church, the cathedral of the South Downs, many old houses, including the magnificent country inn, known as "The Star," which

has oversailing upper storeys, a swinging sign supported by well-wrought ironwork, and the oriel windows adorned with carvings of bishops and monks and convivial companions. The clergy-house is a pre-Reformation building of much interest, which has been acquired by the National Trust.

Bramber

A very beautiful visit is that of Bramber, in Sussex, not far from " breezy " Brighton, but no greater contrast could exist between the two places. There all is modern, urban, fashionable and up-to-date, a London-by-the-sea, that owes its origin as a popular watering-place to the eccentricities of the " First gentleman in Europe " ; here all is quiet and peaceful, a perfect model of what an old English village ought to be. The cottage roofs, sometimes tiled, sometimes stone, are gilded with lichens, their little gardens are bright with flowers in summer, and the hill beyond, crowned with the jagged ruins of the castle, is covered with elm-wood. It was at one time practically on the coast, as an arm of the sea which narrowed down at Steyning was here of great breadth and washed the sides of the castle mound. The sea flowed over the meadows of the Adur Valley, and the masts of ships clustered beyond Steyning Church.

The artist's view of Bramber, showing a half-timbered structure on the left and a tiled-roofed, one-storeyed cottage with tall chimneys on the right, with its hedge and climbing roses, an inn with a swinging sign, and in the distance the sun shining on as picturesque a group of cottages that line the village street as any in England, and farther still the shattered remains of the old castle, is altogether charming.

Bramber Church, dedicated to St. Nicholas, stands on the hill close to the station. It was at one time cruciform, and we can see the relics of the arches of the chancel and of the north and south transepts in the exterior of the present building. The tower, with its round Norman arches, has been converted into a chancel, and the nave is original. There is a Norman south door and some peculiar paintings.

The ruined castle of Bramber has a long history to tell, though it has played no great part in history. Its site is of an oval form surrounded by a deep dry fosse. The mound upon which it stands suggests a prehistoric origin, and was probably a British camp that guarded the entrance to the valley. The Saxon name of the place, Brymmburh, signifies a hill-fortification, and shows that it was in use in pre-Norman times. William the Conqueror granted the rape of Bramber to William de Braose, his friend, a powerful Norman warrior, the Sussex founder of the Duke of Norfolk's family. He erected a strong fortress in the centre of the earthwork, leaving the ancient surrounding fosse untouched.

For centuries the fortress guarded the valley of the Adur and the ancient port that has been supplanted by verdant meadow-land. In the great Civil War it was garrisoned for the King, and held by Captain Temple.

When the Parliamentarians captured it they blew it up, and reduced it to its present state of ruin, which has doubtless been increased by neighbouring builders using it as a quarry.

In this quiet village it would seem that nothing very exciting could ever take place to disturb its peace. But Mr. E. V. Lucas has discovered a letter from John Coulton to Samuel Jeake, of Rye, dated January 8th, 1643–4, describing a pretty fight between the Royalists and Roundheads at this place.

We read : " The enemy attempted Bramber Bridge, but our brave Carleton, and Evernden, with his dragoons, and our Coll.'s horse welcomed them with drakes and musketts, sending some 8 or 9 men to hell (I feare) and one trooper to Arundel Castle prisoner, and one of Capt. Evernden's dragoons to heaven."

In Strange Company

But I seem to see a strange company riding down this village street. One day a young man, dressed in Puritan attire, accompanied by an older man of aristocratic mien, and a serving man, rode along with pretended carelessness, though their faces had an anxious look, especially when they saw three or four troopers approaching them. These soldiers recognised them as Cavaliers, and promptly insulted them, but were met with merry and cheerful rejoinders. So they passed on.

Little did the troopers know that the stranger was the fugitive King Charles II., attended by Lord Wilmot and the faithful George Gunter, who was on his road to Brighton, to France and freedom.



"We turn to the right, past stately Arundel, until we come to Houghton Bridge at Amberley."

This little village once returned two members to Parliament in the "good old days" of pocket boroughs ere yet Reform had sent its blessings o'er the land.

Mr. Lucas tells of a Bramber election in 1679 when George Spencer was returned after enduring the agonies of three things which he abhorred—kissing old women, and drinking wine with sugar and great glasses of burnt brandy.

It had a distinguished member in William Wilberforce, the freer of slaves, who was so little acquainted with the place that when driving through it one day he had to inquire its name, and when told said, "Bramber? Why that's the place I'm member for." Those were grand days for rustic voters; one of these good people refused £1,000 for his vote!*



A Beauty Centre

The whole district of Bramber abounds with interesting and beautiful villages. There is historic Steyning, a little grey town with red roofs, jutting gables, and tile-covered houses, that dates back to the 8th century, a delightful back-water of life where time passes easily along without hurry or hustle. The churches of Old Shoreham and New Shoreham (not that there is anything new about the latter, as it was built in early Norman days) are some of the most interesting in the shire. Shoreham has inspired poets to sing sweetly. Swinburne and Henley have written poems thereon which we should like to quote, if space did not forbid, and the days are never long enough to see all that places like this contain. We turn to the right at Shoreham along the Worthing Road, passing Lancing, Sompting, Broadwater, and many other villages till we reach the Arun River, and then turn to the right past stately Arundel, until we come to Houghton Bridge at Amberley, which the artist has shown in our views.

It is a bridge to contemplate, as he is doing who lies on the grass in the summer-time and feasts his eyes on its noble arches and cut-waters and parapet with little loop-holed turrets. It is very old and was restored by the Bishops of Chichester in the 15th century.

Amberley

Amberley is episcopal, and has a castle or castellated mansion that in ancient times belonged to the Bishops of Chichester. It was built by Langton, Bishop of that See in the 14th century, and more extensively fortified by Bishop Rede in the time of Richard II. The dwelling-house was built by Bishop Sherbourne in 1508. Herein there is the Queen's Room, where doubtless Queen Elizabeth stayed in one of her progresses, and there were paintings by Bernardi executed for the bishop like those in his palace at Chichester, but these have wandered elsewhere. It stands on a low cliff, and has a formidable-looking gateway flanked by towers and a moat spanned by a bridge, but has now degenerated into a farm.

Amberley is famous for its trout, which, according to Fuller, rank with Arundel mullet, Chichester lobster, Selsey cockle, and the carp for which the shire is noted. In olden days this country was muddy and marshy. The village looks down upon the marsh called Wild Brook, through which the river ran; and so marshy was the parish that (according to the Sussex historian, Mr. Lower) the scornful neighbours of the Amberley folk jestingly described them as web-footed. In winter they used to reply to the query "Where do you belong?"—"Amberley, God help us!" But in summer, when the skies were bright and the marsh-land dry—"Amberley, where would you live?" This great morass has now been drained and converted into smiling meadows, re-echoing with the lowing of cattle instead of the hollow boom of the bittern and the croak of the heron. The place used to be spoken of as "Amberley—God knows," and there is a proverb which runs:

> "Amberley—God knows,
> All among the rooks and crows
> Where the good potato grows."

But we must hasten on our quest to find

* "Highways and Byways in Sussex." By E. V. Lucas.

other beautiful villages, and if we fly across in an aeroplane from Amberley to the neighbouring county of Kent we cannot do better than land at Ightham Village. It is one of the most beautiful and delightfully situated in the county of Kent. The view shows the village green surrounded by picturesque old houses, some of which have gables enriched with carved bargeboards; and behind the village rises a hill crowned with a grand old church surrounded by trees. It is dedicated to St. Peter and contains many monuments of departed worthies. The inn, with its separate signboard, faces the village green. It is of half-timber construction, and the nearness of the upright timbers points to the fact that it has been "doing business" since the early days of the 16th century.

The Old Forge, Ightham

One of the most charming of the cottages is known as the Old Forge, a blacksmith's shop of peculiar beauty. It is an L-shaped structure with long red-tiled roof, and a tall chimney on the left with its graceful stack surmounted by an ornamental head is an attractive feature.

The blacksmith is evidently a great garden and flower lover. A wistaria mantles the porch, a vine has climbed to the eaves, and flowers display themselves on stands around the little courtyard wherein the wrecks of carts and other vehicles proclaim that he is also a wheelwright as well as a blacksmith.

But the chief glory of the place is, of course, the famous Ightham Mote, which figures in Nash's "Mansions" and other works on domestic architecture as one of the most charming old houses in the kingdom. There is a grand old gateway that was built in the 15th century, and through it we pass into a square courtyard; but the hall, which is a remarkable feature of the building, was erected early in the 14th century; the chapel is late Tudor, and besides the stone buildings there are parts of half-timbered constructions with gables having decorated bargeboards and much else that is interesting. It is girt, as its name implies, by a moat, which guards the precincts of this delightful old English home.

If we search England through we shall discover many other villages which are worthy of preservation ere the hand of the vandal has fallen upon their quaint old buildings and picturesque surroundings.

But the country calls to us again and we must wander into the fields and woods ere winter's stern blasts rob them of their beauty. The fierce midsummer days are past. The corn is cut and stacked by the skill of the thatcher, who is still an ingenious person, though he has not the art of his sire; nor is the straw cut by machines equal to that reaped with a sickle for thatching purposes. The swallows have flown away and with them the bright days of summer; the larks and the linnets have ceased to sing, and there is a still silence in the woods.

The rose-leaves lie scattered on the lawn, save some gallant buds which strive to open when the sun tries to shine through the haze of autumn—symbols of hopes that were born in summer days and fade and never reach maturity.

The Golden Hues of Autumn

And yet autumn comes clad in a gorgeous dress. Everywhere there is a glow of colour. The leaves of the trees have taken to themselves a golden tint. We enter the forest, where, as Dante wrote, "no track of steps had worn a way." The lonesome horror of the wood with its silence and its shadowy recesses strikes the heart with sadness; but there the many-tinted bracken delights the eye as the declining sunlight pierces the glade and shows, now green, now golden, the decaying fronds, that erst were breast high with their powerful growth. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," is the lesson it preaches. Look at the shapeless ruin of a wasps' nest in early winter, lately the scene of marvellous activity with its predatory mass of winged warriors who preyed upon the fruit in the orchard in their myriads; and now where are they?

A solitary queen is in hiding, painfully dragging weary steps beneath a bough of an aged oak or trying to find shelter in some shed or stable to await for the returning spring. So this fine glade of bracken will soon sink into nothingness, until spring bids the spiral fronds arise again, to flourish and die.

In the meantime the glade is fair with golden hues until winter rains have beaten down the dying fern.

But in autumn there is colour everywhere. The rich green of the Scotch fir contrasts



"One of the most charming of the cottages is the Old Forge, a blacksmith's shop of peculiar beauty." (Ightham.)

with the golden tints of the fading birch and with that of the dying bracken. The holly, which grows so plentifully in our woods, preserves its dark green leaves and is adorned with its bright red berries, which, according to local tradition, presage a hard winter—a superstition and universal belief that I have vainly attempted to verify.

These depend more upon the past spring and summer than on the future season; but they provide food for our birds if the hard frost comes, and remind us of the coming Christmas.

The English Holly

A delightful tree is the holly, the English variety (*Ilex aquifolium*), always beautiful, always bright, constant, and clean; and there are many sorts, some golden, others silver; some with piercing thorns so thick that they are called "hedgehogs," and others that scarcely offer an offending point as you gather the leaves. Berries white and yellow, as well as red, adorn the hollies.

Holly and Christmas always go together. Its bright green leaves make the cheeriest of decorations in church and in the house and servants' hall, where it is the chief foundation of the great bush that hangs there with the oranges and apples and ribbons and paper flowers, and around it the household gathers and the village choir sing lustily:

"God bless the master of this house,
The mistress also,
Likewise the little children
That round the table go."

At least this used to be our custom when life was young, but there is an autumn in life as well as in Nature, and old customs wither and decay like the leaves in the forest, and hearts are not so light as in their spring-time.

Other bright red berries adorn the fields and hedgerows in the autumn. Those of the wild rose and the hawthorn still cling to the branches. Moss and lichens light with brilliant colours the bark of the trunks of the old oak trees, which retain their leaves longer than any other denizens of the woods.

Probably not till December dawns will all their brown shrivelled leaves drop off, unless some very hard early frosts come. The trunk of that old monarch of the glen is hollow, and has its uses for the citizens of the forest. Therein will squirrels keep their store of food, birds build their nests, and the lonely owl will find a convenient place to roost in.

The Legend of the Moss

As we pass through the wood we tread on the soft beds of moss, that defy the approach of winter and show themselves green and bright when all things else decay. There is a beautiful legend about this moss. In a deep hollow in the heart of a forest grew a bed of moss. Though it was thick and soft like a velvet carpet, no one ever stopped to see its beauty, but hurried on to the sunshine. And the moss mourned its hard fate and wished itself a flower in a fine garden; people only trampled upon it; no one ever looked at it. One evening, just as the last golden rays of sunlight shone upon the tree-tops, a pale and weary Man came slowly through the forest. He was Jesus returning from the wilderness after His forty days of fasting and temptation. His feet were blistered with wandering over the burning sand, and were torn and bleeding from the sharp stones and briars.



When He came to the bed of moss and felt its soft coolness on His wounded feet, He paused and spake a blessing on this little plant.

"Do not fret," He said, "because no one notices thee. Bear thy trouble patiently. Thou hast done good to Me and the Father will remember thee."

He had scarcely spoken

when out of the moss budded a lovely rose. Its colour was like the glow of the western sky, when the sun had set, and the veil of tender moss which half concealed it only increased its beauty.

"Moss rose," said the Saviour, "spread throughout the world and teach men the happiness of humility and patience."

The despised moss had softened the Redeemer's earthly pain, had kissed His sore and wounded feet, and for this it had such sweet reward.

There are two kinds of moss in the forest, one light, the other deeper in tone. Another batch of autumn colouring is given by the red and yellow fungi that abound in our Berkshire woods, and an artist friend delights in painting them. When the trees are destitute of leaves these seem to glow with brighter colouring, as if to make up for their neighbours' deficiencies.

Yellow, Brown, and Red

The illustration shows well the chief array of autumn colouring, the brown, yellow, and red. A close observer of Nature thus enumerates the bearers of these tints: Brown are the furrows, the bark of the trees, the fallen leaves, and the stalks of plants; red are the haws, the unripe blackberries, the bryony berries, and the red fungi; and yellow are the hawkweed, ragwort, and the leaves of hazel and elms. With such rich attire does Nature deck herself, ere yet she lays her down to sleep when the boisterous winds and frosts and snows of winter soothe her to slumber.

In these autumn days the squirrel, most charming denizen of the wood, is gathering its nuts and acorns for "cold storage" during the winter months. We never see them in the garden save when the nuts are getting ripe. They can tell whether a nut is good and has a kernel or not, without cracking it; and under the trees of the nut-walk there are always plenty of these discarded nuts, and if you open them you will find that the squirrels have never made a mistake. In the cold weather they huddle together in their nests, four or five together, to keep themselves warm. Sportsmen have always a tender heart for a squirrel. Our old M.F.H. one day, when the hounds were running, discovered a squirrel in a trap. He stopped the hounds, released the squirrel, and then proceeded to hunt the fox.

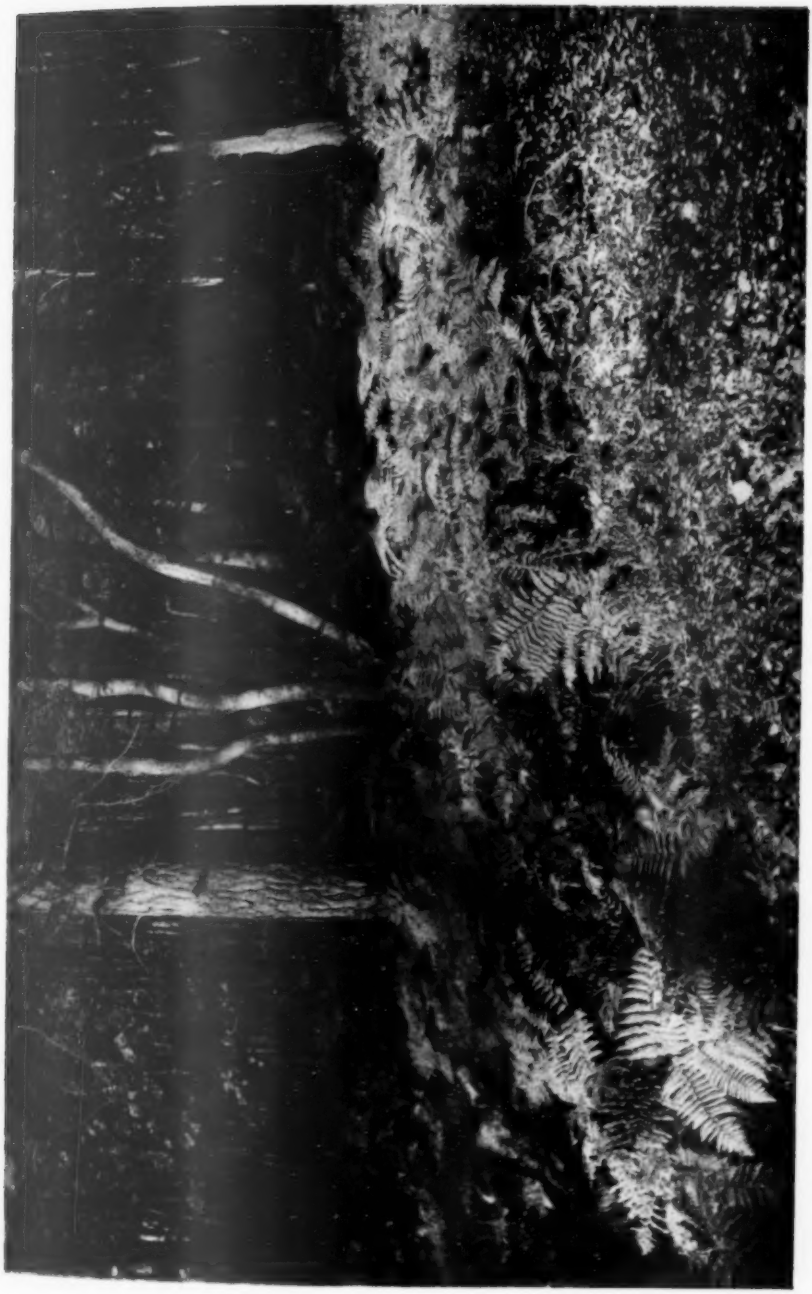
Cub-hunting has begun, and in the early morning the hounds are drawing the combe wood and rattling the cubs, and it is pleasant to hear their cheery notes once more and to look forward to the wintry days in November when regular hunting begins.

The Old Country

We have wandered far along the highways and byways of rural England into the woods and forests. We have trodden them in all seasons, amid frost and snow and when spring has been calling the flowers from their leafy beds and "the time of the singing birds has come"; we have tramped the fields in leafy June and revelled in the glories of the summer days, and when autumn has touched with its cold fingers the face of Nature and woven wondrous textures and gorgeous colouring on tree and hedgerow. And now winter is with us once more. Some love to fly with the swallows southward to regions where the sun is always shining, or to Alpine altitudes for winter sports and pastimes, but the Old Country is good enough for us. We are content to explore the English roads that are ever attractive to the wayfarer, and to wander along the bypaths and the woods, to woo Nature in all her moods, to see the "exquisite filigree of frost and frosted snow" upon the brown bracken, to watch the wild creatures at their work and play in the lonesome wood, when the weather is open to join in the merry hunt, and when the day declines to enjoy the glow of a piled-up wood fire in the study grate, and

> "Old books to read.
> Ay, bring those nodes of wit,
> The brazen-clasped, the vellum writ,
> Time-honoured tomes!
> The same my sire scanned before,
> The same my grandsire thumbed o'er,
> The same his sire homeward bore,
> The well-earned meed
> Of Oxford's domes:
> Old Homer blind,
> Old Horace, rake Anacreon, by
> Old Tully, Plautus, Terence lie;
> Mort Arthur's olden minstrelsie,
> Quaint Burton, quainter Spenser, ay,
> And Gervase Markham's venerie—
> Nor leave behind
> The Holy Book by which we live and die."

With such companions life can ne'er be dull. Let others seek the city and its moil of care and strife and noise and affectations. The old road, the sure road, though it leads oftentimes uphill, the byway, wood, and garden pleasance are for me.



"The glade is fair
with golden hues."

Our New Serial Story

MICHAEL

By

E. F. BENSON

SYNOPSIS OF FIRST INSTALMENT

Michael Comber, the son and heir of Lord Ashbridge, is wearied of the conventional life he is expected to live, and for which he feels he is not fitted. His cousin Francis would have filled the part of the heir to a lord to perfection, but Michael would rather follow his bent towards music. He therefore resigns his commission in the Guards, and informs his father of the fact. Naturally, he expects opposition in that quarter, and comes down to Ashbridge to interview him on the subject.

CHAPTER III

THE INTERVIEW

MICHAEL'S train, as his mother had so infallibly pronounced, was late, and he had arrived only just in time to hurry to his room and dress quickly, in order not to add to his crimes the additional one of unpunctuality, for unpunctuality, so Lord Ashbridge held, was the politeness not only of kings, but of all who had any pretence to decent breeding. His father gave him a carefully-iced welcome, his mother the tip of her long, camel-like lips, and they waited solemnly for the appearance of Aunt Barbara, who, it would seem, had forfeited her claims to family by her marriage. A man-servant and a half looked after each of them at dinner, and the twelve Lord Ashbridges in uniform looked down from their illuminated frames on their degenerate descendant.

The only bright spot in this portentous banquet was Aunt Barbara, who had chosen that evening, with what intention may possibly be guessed, to put on an immense diamond tiara and a breastplate of rubies, while Og, after one futile attempt to play with the footmen, yielded himself up to the chilling atmosphere of good breeding, and ate his mutton-chops with great composure. But Aunt Barbara, fortified by her gems, ate an excellent dinner, and talked all the time with occasional bursts of unexplained laughter.

Afterwards, when Michael was left alone with his father, he found that his best efforts at conversation elicited only monosyllabic replies, and at last, in the despairing desire to bring things to a head, he asked him if he had received his letter. An affirmative monosyllable, followed by the hissing of Lord Ashbridge's cigarette end as he dropped it into his coffee cup, answered him, and he perceived that the approaching storm was to be rendered duly impressive by the thundery stillness that preceded it. Then his father rose, and as he passed Michael, who held the door open for him, he said:

"If you can spare the time, Michael, I would like to have a talk with you when your mother and aunt have gone to bed."

That was not very long delayed; Michael imagined that Aunt Barbara must have had a hint, for before half-past ten she announced with a skilfully suppressed laugh that she was about to retire, and kissed Michael affectionately. Both her laugh and her salute were encouraging; he felt that he was being backed up. Then a procession of footmen came into the room bearing lemonade and soda water and a plate of plain biscuits, and the moment after he was alone with his father.

Lord Ashbridge rose and walked, very tall and majestic, to the fireplace, where he stood for a moment with his back to his son. Then he turned round.

"Now about this nonsense of your resigning your commission, Michael," he said. "I don't propose to argue about it, and I am just going to tell you. If, as you have informed me, you have actually sent it in, you will write to-morrow with due apologies and ask that it may be withdrawn. I will see your letter before you send it."

Michael had intended to be as quiet and respectful as possible, consistent with firmness, but a sentence here gave him a spasm of anger.

"I don't know what you mean, sir," he said, "by saying 'if I have sent it in.' You have received my letter in which I tell you that I have done so."

Already, even at the first words, there was bad blood between them. Michael's face had clouded with that gloom which his father would certainly call sulky, and for himself he resented the tone of Michael's reply. To make matters worse, he gave his little falsetto cackle, which no doubt was intended to convey the impression of confident good humour. But there was, it must be confessed, very little good humour about it, though he still felt no serious doubt about the result of this interview.

"I am afraid perhaps, then, that I did not take your letter quite seriously, my dear Michael," he said, in the bantering tone that froze Michael's cordiality completely up. "I glanced through it; I saw a lot of nonsense—or so it struck me—about your resigning your commission and studying music; I think you mentioned Baireuth, and settling down in London afterwards."

"Yes. I said all that," said Michael. "But you make a mistake if you do not see that it was written seriously."

His father glanced across at him, where he sat with his heavy, plain face, his long arms and short legs, and the sight merely irritated him. With his passion for convention (and one of the most important conventions was that Combers should be fine, strapping, normal people) he hated the thought that it was his son who presented that appearance. And his son's mind seemed to him at this moment as ungainly as his person. Again, very unwisely, he laughed, still thinking to carry this off by the high hand.

"Yes, but I can't take that rubbish seriously," he said. "I am asking your permission now to inquire, without any nonsense, into what you mean."

Michael frowned. He felt the insincerity of his father's laugh, and rebelled against the unfairness of it. The question, he knew well, was sarcastically asked, the flavour of irony in the "permission to inquire" was not there by accident. To speak like that implied contempt of his opposition; he felt that he was being treated like a child over some nursery rebellion, in which subsequently, there is no real possibility of disobedience. He felt his anger rising in spite of himself.

"If you refer to it as rubbish, sir, there is the end of the matter."

"Ah! I thought we should soon agree," said Lord Ashbridge, chuckling.

"You mistake me," said Michael. "There is the end of the matter, because I won't discuss it any more, if you treat me like this. I will say good night, if you intend to persist in the idea that you can just brush my resolves away like that."

This clearly took his father aback; it was a perfectly dignified and proper attitude to take in the face of ridicule, and Lord Ashbridge, though somewhat an adept at the art of self-deception—as, for instance, when he habitually beat the golf professional—could not disguise from himself that his policy had been to laugh and blow away Michael's absurd ideas. But it was abundantly clear at this moment that this apparently easy operation was out of his reach.

He got up with more amenity in his manner than he had yet shown, and laid his hand on Michael's shoulder as he stood in front of him, evidently quite prepared to go away.

"Come, my dear Michael. This won't do," he said. "I thought it best to treat your absurd schemes with a certain lightness, and I have only succeeded in irritating you."

Michael was perfectly aware that he had scored. And as his object was to score he made another criticism.

"When you say 'absurd schemes,' sir," he said, with quiet respect, "are you not still laughing at them?"

Lord Ashbridge again retreated strategically.

"Very well; I withdraw 'absurd,'" he said. "Now sit down again, and we will talk. Tell me what is in your mind."

Michael made a great effort with himself. He desired, in the secret, real Michael, to be reasonable and cordial, to behave filially, while all the time his nerves were on edge with his father's ridicule, and with his instinctive knowledge of his father's distaste for him.

"Well, it's like this, father," he said. "I'm doing no good as I am. I went into the Guards, as you know, because it was the right thing to do. A business man's son is put into business for the same reason. And I'm not good at it."

Michael paused a moment.

"My heart isn't in it," he said, "and I dislike it. It seems to me useless. We're for show. And my heart is quite entirely in music. It's the thing I care for more than anything else."

Again he paused; all that came so easily to his tongue when he was speaking to Francis was congealed now when he felt the contempt with which, though unexpressed, he knew he inspired his father.

Lord Ashbridge waited with careful politeness, his eyes fixed on the ceiling, his large person completely filling his chair, just as his atmosphere filled the room. He said nothing at all until the silence rang in Michael's ears.

"That is all I can tell you," he said at length.

Lord Ashbridge carefully conveyed the ash from his cigarette to the fireplace before he spoke. He felt that the time had come for his most impressive effort.

"Very well, then, listen to me," he said. "What you suffer from, Michael, is a mere want of self-confidence and from modesty. You don't seem to grasp—I have often noticed this—who you are and what your importance is—an importance which everybody is willing to recognise if you will only assume it. You have the privileges of your position, which you don't sufficiently value, but you have also the responsibilities of it, which I am afraid you are inclined to shirk. You haven't got the large view; you haven't the sense of patriotism. There are a great many things in my position—the position into which you will step—which I would much sooner be without. But we have received a tradition, and we are bound to hand it on intact. You may think that this has nothing to do with your being in the Guards, but it has. We"—and he seemed to swell a little—"we are bound in honour to take the lead in the service of our country, and we must do it whether we like it or not. We have to till, with our own efforts, 'our goodly heritage.' You have to learn the meaning of such words as patriotism, and caste, and duty."

Lord Ashbridge thought that he was really putting this very well indeed, and he had the sustaining consciousness of sincerity. He entirely believed what he said, and felt that it must carry conviction to anyone who listened to it with anything like an open mind. The only thing that he did not allow for was that he personally immensely enjoyed his social and dominant position, thinking it indeed the only position which was really worth having. This naturally gave an aid to comprehension, and he did not take into account that Michael was not so blessed as he, and indeed lacked this very superior individual enlightenment. But his own words kindled the flame of this illumination, and without noticing the blank stolidity of Michael's face he went on with gathering confidence:

"I am sure you are high-minded, my dear Michael," he said. "And it is to your high-mindedness that I—yes, I don't mind saying it—that I appeal. In a moment of unreflectiveness you have thrown overboard what I am sure is real to you, the sense, broadly speaking, that you are English and of the highest English class, and have intended to devote yourself to more selfish and pleasure-loving aims, and to dwell in a tinkle of pleasant sounds that please your ear; and I'm sure I don't wonder, because, as your mother and I both know, you play charmingly. But I feel confident that your better mind does not really confuse the mere diversions of life with its serious issues."

Michael suddenly rose to his feet.

"Father, I'm afraid this is no use at all," he said. "All that I feel, and all that I can't say, I know is unintelligible to you. You have called it rubbish once, and you think it is rubbish still."

Lord Ashbridge's eloquence was suddenly arrested. He had been cantering gleefully along, and had the very distinct impression of having run up against a stone wall. He dismounted, hurt, but in no way broken.

"I am anxious to understand you, Michael," he said.

"Yes, father, but you don't," said he. "You have been explaining me all wrong. For instance, I don't regard music as a diversion. That is the only explanation there is of me."

"And as regards my wishes and my authority?" asked his father.

Michael squared his shoulders and his mind.

"I am exceedingly sorry to disappoint you in the matter of your wishes," he said; "but in the matter of your authority I can't recognise it when the question of my whole life is at stake. I know that I am your son, and I want to be dutiful, but I have my own individuality as well. That only recognises the authority of my own conscience."

That seemed to Lord Ashbridge both

tragic and ludicrous. Completely subservient himself to the conventions which he so much enjoyed, it was like the defiance of a child to say such things. He only just checked himself from laughing again.

"I refuse to take that answer from you," he said.

"I have no other to give you," said Michael. "But I should like to say once more that I am sorry to disobey your wishes."

The repetition took away his desire to laugh. In fact, he could not have laughed.

"I don't want to threaten you, Michael," he said. "But you may know that I have a very free hand in the disposal of my property."

"Is that a threat?" asked Michael.

"It is a hint."

"Then, father, I can only say that I should be perfectly satisfied with anything you may do," said Michael. "I wish you could leave everything you have to Francis. I tell you in all sincerity that I wish he had been my elder brother. You would have been far better pleased with him."

Lord Ashbridge's anger rose. He was naturally so self-complacent as to be seldom disposed to anger, but its rarity was not due to kindliness of nature.

"I have before now noticed your jealousy of your cousin," he observed.

Michael's face went white.

"That is infamous and untrue, father," he said.

Lord Ashbridge turned on him.

"Apologise for that," he said.

Michael looked up at his high towering form without a tremor.

"I wait for the withdrawal of your accusation that I am jealous of Francis," he replied.

There was a dead silence. Lord Ashbridge stood there in swollen and speechless indignation, and Michael faced him undismayed. . . . And then suddenly to the boy there came an impulse of pure pity for his father's disappointment in having a son like himself. He saw with the candour which was so real a part of him how hopeless it must be, to a man of his father's mind, to have a millstone like himself unalterably bound round his neck, fit to choke and drown him.

"Indeed, I am not jealous of Francis, father," he said, "and I speak quite truthfully when I said how I sympathise with you in having a son like me. I don't want to vex you. I want to make the best of myself."

Lord Ashbridge stood looking exactly like his statue in the market-place at Ashbridge.

"If that is the case, Michael," he said, "it is within your power. You will write the letter I spoke about."

Michael paused a moment, as if waiting for more. It did not seem to him possible that his appeal should bear no further fruit than that. But it was soon clear that there was no more to come.

"I will wish you good night, father," he said.

Sunday was a day on which Lord Ashbridge was almost more himself than during the week, so shining and public an example did he become of the British nobleman. Instead of having breakfast, according to the middle-class custom, rather later than usual, that solid sausagy meal was half an hour earlier, so that all the servants, except those whose presence in the house was imperatively necessary for purposes of lunch, should go to church. Thus Old George and Lord Ashbridge's private boat were exceedingly busy for the half-hour preceding church time, the last boat-load holding the family, whose arrival was the signal for service to begin. Lady Ashbridge, however, always went on earlier, for she presided at the organ. Those of the household who could sing clustered in the choir-pews near the organ, while the family sat in a large, square box, with a stove in the centre.

Behind them, separated from the rest of the church by an ornamental ironwork grille, was the Comber chapel, in which antiquarians took nearly as much pleasure as Lord Ashbridge himself. Here reclined a glorious company of sixteenth century knights, with their honourable ladies at their sides, unyielding marble bolsters at their heads, and grotesque dogs at their feet. Later, when their peerage was conferred, they lost a little of their yeoman simplicity, and became peruked and robed and breeched; one, indeed, in the age of George III., who was blessed with poetical aspirations, appeared in bare feet and a Roman toga with a scroll of manuscript in his hand; while later again, mere tablets on the walls commemorated their almost uncanny virtues.

And just on the other side of the grille, but a step away, sat the present-day representatives of the line, with Lady Ashbridge



'Now about this nonsense of your resigning your commission.' "—*p.* 171.

Drawn by Stanley Davis.

near by at the organ, Lord Ashbridge himself and his sister, large and smart and comely, and Michael beside them, short and heavy, with his soul full of the aspirations his father neither cared for nor understood.

Church over, the company made its way back to the house. Michael, of course, was in disgrace; his father, pending some further course of action, neither spoke to him nor looked at him. After a rather portentous lunch, however, there came some relief, for his father did not ask his company on the usual Sunday afternoon stroll, and Aunt Barbara never walked at all unless she was obliged. In consequence, Michael joined her on the terrace, with the intention of talking the situation over with her.

Aunt Barbara was perfectly willing to do this, and she opened the discussion very pleasantly with peals of laughter.

"My dear, I delight in you," she said; "and altogether this is the most entertaining day I have ever spent here. Combers are supposed to be very serious, solid people, but for unconscious humour there isn't a family in England or even in the States to compare with them. Our lunch just now; if you could put it into a satirical comedy called *The Aristocracy*, it would make the fortune of any theatre."

A dawning smile began to break through Michael's tragedy face.

"I suppose it was rather funny," he said. "But really I'm wretched about it, Aunt Barbara."

"My dear, what is there to be wretched about? You might have been wretched if you had found you couldn't stand up to your father, but I gather, though I know nothing directly, that you did. At least, your mother has said to me three times, twice on the way to church and once while coming back: 'Michael has vexed his father very much.'

"And then the lunch! I am in disgrace too, because I said perfectly plainly yesterday that I was on your side; and there we were at lunch, with your father apparently unable to see either you or me, and unconscious of our presence. Fancy pretending not to see me! You can't help seeing me, a large, bright object like me! And what will happen next? That's what tickles me to death, as they say on my side of the Atlantic. Will he gradually begin to perceive us again, like objects looming through a fog, or shall we come into view suddenly, as if going round a corner? And you are just as funny, my dear, with your long face and air of depressed determination. Why be heavy, Michael? So many people are heavy, and none of them can tell you why."

It was impossible not to feel the unfreezing effect of this. Michael thawed to it, as he would have thawed to Francis.

"Perhaps they can't help it, Aunt Barbara," he said. "At least, I know I can't. I really wish I could learn how to. I—I don't see the funny side of things till it is pointed out. I thought lunch a sort of hell, you know. Of course, it was funny his appearing not to see either of us. But it stands for more than that; it stands for his complete misunderstanding of me."

Aunt Barbara had the sense to see that the real Michael was speaking. When people were being unreal, when they were pompous or adopting attitudes, she could attend to nothing but their absurdity, which engrossed her altogether. But she never laughed at real things; real things were not funny but were facts

"He quite misunderstands," went on Michael, with the eagerness with which the shy welcome comprehension. "He thinks I can make my mind like his if I choose; and if I don't choose, or rather can't choose, he thinks that his wishes, his authority, should be sufficient to make me act as if it was. Well, I won't do that. He may go on"—and that pleasant smile lit up Michael's plain face—"he may go on being unaware of my presence as long as he pleases. I am very sorry it should be so, but I can't help it. And the worst of it is, that opposition of that sort—his sort—makes me more determined than ever."

Aunt Barbara nodded.

"And your friends?" she asked. "What will they think?"

Michael looked at her quite simply and directly.

"Friends?" he said. "I haven't got any."

"Ah, my dear, that's nonsense!" she said.

"I wish it was. Oh, Francis is a friend, I know. He thinks me an odd old thing, but he likes me. Other people don't. And I can't see why they should. I'm sure it's my fault. It's because I'm heavy. You said I was yourself."

"Then I was a great ass," remarked Aunt Barbara. "You wouldn't be heavy with people who understood you. You aren't heavy with me, for instance; but, my dear, lead isn't in it when you are with your father."

"But what am I to do, if I'm like that?" asked the boy.

She held up her large, fat hand, and marked the points off on her fingers.

"Three things," she said. "Firstly, get away from people who don't understand you, and whom, incidentally, you don't understand; secondly, try to see how ridiculous you and everybody else always are; and, thirdly, which is much the most important, don't think about yourself. If I thought about myself I should consider how old and fat and ugly I am. I'm not ugly really; you needn't be foolish and tell me so. I should spoil my life by trying to be young, and only eating devilled cod-fish and drinking hot plum-juice, or whatever is the accepted remedy for what we call obesity. We're all odd old things, as you say. We can only get away from that depressing fact by doing something, and not thinking about ourselves. We can all try not to be egoists. Egoism is the really heavy quality in the world."

She paused a moment in this inspired discourse and whistled to Og, who had stretched his weary limbs across a bed of particularly fine geraniums.

"There!" she said pointing, "if your dog had done that, you would be submerged in depression at the thought of how vexed your father would be. That would be because you are thinking of the effect on



"'And, thirdly, which is much the most important, don't think about yourself.'"

Drawn by Stanley Davis.

yourself. As it's my dog that has done it—dear me, they do look squashed now he has got up—you don't really mind about your father's vexation, because you won't have to think about yourself. That is wise of you; if you were a little wiser still, you would picture to yourself how ridiculous I shall look apologising for Og. Kindly kick him, Michael; he will understand. Naughty! And as for your not having any friends, that would be exceedingly sad, if you had gone the right way to get them and failed. But you haven't. You haven't even gone among the people who could be your friends. Your friends, broadly speaking, must like the same sort of things as you. There must be a common basis. You can't even argue with somebody, or disagree with somebody unless you have a common ground to start from. If I say that black is white, and you think it is blue, we can't get on. It leads nowhere. And, finally——"

Aunt Barbara turned round and faced him directly.

"Finally, don't be so cross, my dear," she said.

"But am I?" asked he.

"Yes. You don't know it, or else probably, since you are a very decent fellow, you wouldn't be. You expect not to be liked, and that is cross of you. A good-humoured person expects to be liked, and almost always is. You expect not to be understood, and that's dreadfully cross. You think your father doesn't understand you; no more he does, but don't go on thinking about it. You think it is a great bore to be your father's only son, and wish Francis was instead. That's cross; you may think it's fine, but it isn't, and it is also ungrateful. You can have great fun if you will only be good-tempered!"

"How did you know that—about Francis, I mean?" asked Michael.

"Does it happen to be true? Of course it does. Every cross young man wishes he was somebody else."

"No, not quite that," began Michael.

"Don't interrupt. It is sufficiently accurate. And you think about your appearance, my dear. It will do quite well. You might have had two noses, or only one eye, whereas you have two rather jolly ones. And do try to see the joke in other people, Michael. You don't see the joke in your interview last night with your father. It must have been excruciatingly funny. I don't say it wasn't sad and serious as well. But it was funny too; there were points."

Michael shook his head.

"I didn't see them," he said.

"But I should have, and I should have been right. All dignity is funny, simply because it is sham. When dignity is real, you don't know it's dignity. But your father knew he was being dignified, and you knew you were being dignified. My dear, what a pair of you!"

Michael frowned.

"But is nothing serious, then?" he asked. "Surely it was serious enough last night. There was I in rank rebellion to my father, and it vexed him horribly; it did more, it grieved him."

She laid her hand gently on Michael's knee.

"As if I didn't know that!" she said. "We're all sorry for that, though I should have been much sorrier if you had given in and ceased to vex him. But there it is! Accept that, and then, my dear, swiftly apply yourself to perceive the humour of it. And now, about your plans!"

"I shall go to Baireuth on Wednesday, and then on to Munich," explained Michael.

"That, of course. Perhaps you may find the humour of a Channel crossing. I look for it in vain. Yet I don't know. . . . The man who puts on a yachting-cap, and asks if there's a bit of a sea on. It proves to be the case, and he is excessively unwell. I must look out for him next time I cross. And then?"

"Then I shall settle in town and study. Oh, here's my father coming home."

Lord Ashbridge approached down the terrace. He stopped for a moment at the desecrated geranium bed, saw the two sitting together, and turned at right angles and went into the house. Almost immediately a footman came out with a long dog-lead and advanced hesitatingly to Og. Og was convinced that he had come to play with him, and crouched and growled and retreated and advanced with engaging affability. Out of the windows of the library looked Lord Ashbridge's baleful face. . . . Aunt Barbara swayed out of her chair, and laid a trembling hand on Michael's shoulder.

"I shall go and apologise for Og," she said. "I shall do it quite sincerely, my dear. But there are points."

CHAPTER IV

HERMANN FALBE

MICHAEL practised a certain mature and rather elderly precision in the ordinary affairs of daily life. His habits were almost unduly tidy and punctual; he answered letters by return of post, he mislaid things nor tore up documents which he particularly desired should be preserved; he kept his gold in a purse and his change in a trousers-pocket, and in matters of travelling he always arrived at stations with plenty of time to spare, and had such creature comforts as he desired for his journey in a neat Gladstone bag above his head. He never travelled first-class, for the very simple and adequate reason that, though very well off, he preferred to spend his money in ways that were more productive of usefulness or pleasure; and thus, when he took his place in the corner of a second-class compartment of the Dover-Ostend express on the Wednesday morning following, he was the only occupant of it.

Probably he had never felt so fully at liberty, nor enjoyed a keener zest for life and the future. For the first time he had asserted his own indisputable right to stand on his own feet, and though he was genuinely sorry for his father's chagrin at not being able to tuck him up in the family coach, his own sense of independence could not but wave its banners. There had been a second interview, no less fruitless than the first, and Lord Ashbridge had told him that when next his presence was desired at home, he would be informed of the fact. His mother had cried in a mild, trickling fashion, but it was quite obvious that in her heart of hearts she was more concerned with a bilious attack of peculiar intensity that had attacked Petsy. She wished Michael would not be so disobedient and vex his father, but she was quite sure that before long some formula, in diplomatic phrase, would be found on which reconciliation could be based; whereas it was highly uncertain whether any formula could be found that would produce the desired effect on Petsy, whose illness she attributed to the shock of Og's sudden and disconcerting appearance on Saturday, when all Petsy's nervous force was required to digest the copious cream. Consequently, though she threw reproachful glances at Michael, those directed at Barbara, who was the cause of the acuter tragedy, were pointed with more penetrating blame. Indeed, it is questionable whether Lady Ashbridge would have cried at all over Michael's affairs had not Petsy's also been in so lamentable and critical a state.

Just as the train began to move out of the station a young man rushed across the platform, eluded with amazing agility the embrace of the guard who attempted to stop him, and jumped into Michael's compartment. He slammed the door after him, and leaned out, apparently looking for someone, whom he soon saw.

"Just caught it, Sylvia," he shouted. "Send on my luggage, will you? It's in the taxi still, I think, and I haven't paid the man. Good-bye, darling."

He waved to her till the curving line took the platform out of sight, and then sat down with a laugh, and eyes of friendly interest for Michael.

"Narrow squeak, wasn't it?" he said gleefully. "I thought the guard had collared me. And I should have missed *Parsifal*."

Michael had recognised him at once as he rushed across the platform; his shouting to Sylvia had but confirmed the recognition; and here on the day of his entering into his new kingdom of liberty was one of its citizens almost thrown into his arms. But for the moment his old invincible habit of shyness and sensitiveness forbade any responsive lightness of welcome, and he was merely formal, merely courteous.

"And all your luggage left behind," he said. "Won't you be dreadfully uncomfortable?"

"Uncomfortable? Why?" asked Falbe. "I shall buy a handkerchief and a collar every day, and a shirt and a pair of socks every other day till it arrives."

Michael felt a sudden, daring impulse. He remembered Aunt Barbara's salutary remarks about crossness being the equivalent of thinking about oneself. And the effort that it cost him may be taken as the measure of his solitary disposition.

"But you needn't do that," he said, "if—if you will be good enough to borrow of me till your things come."

He blurted it out awkwardly, almost brusquely, and Falbe looked slightly amused at this wholly surprising offer of hospitality.

"But that's awfully good of you," he said, laughing and saying nothing direct about his acceptance. "It implies, too, that

you are going to Baireuth. We travel together then, I hope, for it is dismal work travelling alone, isn't it? My sister tells me that half my friends were picked up in railway carriages. Been there before?"

Michael felt himself lured from the ordinary aloofness of attitude and demeanour, which had been somewhat accustomed to view all strangers with suspicion. And yet, though till this moment he had never spoken to him, he could hardly regard Falbe as a stranger, for he had heard him say on the piano what his sister understood by the songs of Brahms and Schubert. He could not help glancing at Falbe's hands, as they busied themselves with the filling and lighting of a pipe, and felt that he knew something of those long, broad-tipped fingers, smooth and white and strong. The man himself he found to be quite different from what he had expected; he had seen him before, eager and intent and anxious-faced, absorbed in the task of following another mind; now he looked much younger, much more boyish.

"No, it's my first visit to Baireuth," he said, "and I can't tell you how excited I am about it. I've been looking forward to it so much that I almost expect to be disappointed."

Falbe blew out a cloud of smoke and laughter.

"Oh, you're safe enough," he said. "Baireuth never disappoints. It's one of the facts—a reliable fact. And Munich? Do you go to Munich afterwards?"

"Yes. I hope so."

Falbe clicked with his tongue.

"Lucky fellow," he said. "How I wish I was. But I've got to get back again after my week. You'll spend the mornings in the galleries, and the afternoons and evenings at the opera. Ah, Munich!"

He came across from the other side of the carriage and sat next Michael, putting his feet up on the seat opposite.

"Talk of Munich," he said. "I was born in Munich, and I happen to know that it's the heavenly Jerusalem, neither more nor less."

"Well, the heavenly Jerusalem is practically next door to Baireuth," said Michael.

"I know; but it can't be managed. However, there's a week of unalloyed bliss between me now and the desolation of London in August. What is so maddening is to think of all the people who could go to Munich and don't."

Michael held debate within himself. He felt that he ought to tell his new acquaintance that he knew who he was, that, however trivial their conversation might be, it somehow resembled eavesdropping to talk to a chance fellow-passenger as if he was a complete stranger. But it required again a certain effort to make the announcement.

"I think I had better tell you," he said at length, "that I know you, that I've listened to you at least, at your sister's recital a few days ago."

Falbe turned to him with the friendliest pleasure.

"Ah! were you there?" he asked. "I hope you listened to her, then, not to me. She sang well, didn't she?"

"But divinely. At the same time I did listen to you, especially in the French songs. There was less song, you know."

Falbe laughed.

"And more accompaniment!" he said. "Perhaps you play?"

Michael was seized with a fit of shyness at the idea of talking to Falbe about himself.

"Oh, I just strum," he said.

Throughout the journey their acquaintanceship ripened; and casually, in dropped remarks, the two began to learn something about each other. Falbe's command of English, as well as his sister's, which was so complete that it was impossible to believe that a foreigner was speaking, was explained, for it came out that his mother was English, and that from infancy they had spoken German and English indiscriminately. His father, who had died some dozen years before, had been a singer of some note in his native land, but was distinguished more for his teaching than his practice, and it was he who had taught his daughter. Hermann Falbe himself had always intended to be a pianist, but the poverty in which they were left at his father's death had obliged him to give lessons rather than devote himself to his own career; but now at the age of thirty he found himself within sight of the competence that would allow him to cut down his pupils, and begin to be a pupil again himself.

His sister, moreover, for whom he had slaved for years in order that she might continue her own singing education unchecked, was now more than able, especially



"'Just caught it, Sylvia,' he shouted.
'Send on my luggage, will you?'"—*p.* 179.

Drawn by Stanley Davis.

after these last three months in London, where she had suddenly leaped into eminence, to support herself and contributed to the expenses of their common home. But there was still, so Michael gathered, no great superabundance of money, and he guessed that Falbe's inability to go to Munich was due to the question of expense.

All this came out by inference and allusion rather than by direct information, while Michael, naturally reticent and feeling that his own uneventful affairs could have no interest for anybody, was less communicative. And, indeed, while shunning the appearance of inquisitiveness, he was far too eager to get hold of his new acquaintance to think of volunteering much himself. Here to him was this citizen of the new country who all his life had lived in the palace of art, and that in no dilettante fashion, but with set aim and serious purpose. And Falbe abounded in such topics; he knew the singers and the musicians of the world, and, which was much more than that, he was himself of them; humble, no doubt, both in circumstances and achievement as yet, but clearly to Michael of the blood royal of artistry. That was the essential thing about him as regards his relations with his fellow traveller, though, when next morning the spires of Cologne and the swift river of his fatherland came into sight, he burst out into a sort of rhapsody of patriotism that mockingly covered a great sincerity.

"Ah! beloved land!" he cried. "Soil of heaven and of divine harmony! Hail to thee! Hail to thee! Rhine, Rhine deep and true and steadfast. . . ." And he waved his hat and sang the greeting of Brunnhilda. Then he turned laughingly to Michael.

"I am sufficiently English to know how ridiculous that must seem to you," he said, "for I love England also, and the passengers on the boat would merely think me mad if I apostrophised the cliffs of Dover and the mud of the English roads. But here I am a German again, and I would willingly kiss the soil. You English—we

English, I may say, for I am as much English as German—I believe have got the same feeling somewhere in our hearts, but we lock it up and hide it away. Pray God I shall never have to choose to which nation I belong, though for that matter there is no choice in it at all, for I am certainly a German subject."

He chattered on in tremendous high spirits.

"And to think that to-night we shall sleep in true German beds," he said. "I allow that the duvet is not so convenient as blankets, and that there is a watershed always up the middle of your bed, so that during the night your person descends to one side while the duvet rolls down the other; but it is German, which makes up for any trifling inconvenience."

All this youthful, unrestrained enthusiasm was a revelation to Michael. Intentionally absurd as Falbe's rhapsody on the Fatherland had been, Michael knew that it sprang from a solid sincerity which was not ashamed of expressing itself. Living, as he had always done, in the rather formal and reticent atmosphere of his class and environment, he would have thought this fervour of patriotism in an English mouth ridiculous, or, if persevered in, merely bad form. Yet when Falbe hailed the Rhine and the spires of Cologne, it was clear that there was no bad form about it at all. He felt like that; and, indeed, as Michael was beginning to perceive, he felt with a similar intensity on all subjects about which he felt at all. There was something of the same vivid quality about Aunt Barbara, but Aunt Barbara's vividness was chiefly devoted to the hunt of the absurdities of her friends, and it was always the concretely ridiculous that she pursued. But this handsome, vital young man, with his eagerness and his welcome for the world, who had fallen with so delightful a cordiality into Michael's company, had already an attraction for him of a sort he had never felt before.

Dimly, as the days went by, he began to conjecture that he who had never had a friend was being hailed and halloed to, was being ordered, if not by precept, at any rate by example, to come out of the shell of his reserve, and let himself feel and let himself express. He could see how utterly different was Falbe's general conception and practice of life from his own; to Michael it had always been a congregation of strangers—Francis excepted—who moved about, busy with each other and with affairs that had no allure for him, and were, though not uncivil, wholly alien to him. He was willing to grant that this alienation, this absence of comradeship which he had missed all his life, was of his own making, in so far as his shyness and sensitiveness were the cause of it; but in effect he had never yet had a friend, because he had never yet taken his shutters down, so to speak, or thrown his front door open. He had peeped out through chinks, and felt how lonely he was, but he had not given anyone a chance to get in.

Falbe, on the other hand, lived at his window, ready to hail the passer-by, even as he had hailed Michael, with cheerful words. There he lounged in his shirt-sleeves, you might say, with elbows on the window-sill; and not from politeness, but from good fellowship, from the fact that he liked people, was at home to everybody. He liked people; there was the key to it. And Michael, however much he might be capable of liking people, had up till now given them no sign of it. It really was not their fault if they had not guessed it.

Two days passed, on the first of which *Parsifal* was given, and on the second *Meistersinger*. On the third there was no performance, and the two young men had agreed to meet in the morning and drive out of the town to a neighbouring village among the hills, and spend the day there in the woods. Michael had looked forward to this day with extraordinary pleasure, but there was mingled with it a sort of agony of apprehension that Falbe would find him a very boring companion. But the precepts of Aunt Barbara came to his mind, and he reflected that the certain and sure way of proving a bore was to be taken up with the idea that he might be. And anyhow, Falbe had proposed the plan himself.

They lunched in a little restaurant near a forest-enclosed lake, and since the day was very hot, did no more than stroll up the hill for a hundred yards, where they would get some hint of breeze, and disposed themselves at length on the carpet of pine-needles. Through the thick boughs overhead the sunlight reached them only in specks and flakes, the wind was but as a distant sea in the branches, and Falbe rolled over on to his face, and sniffed at the aromatic leaves with the gusto with which he enjoyed all that was to him enjoyable.

"Ah! that's good, that's good!" he said.

"How I love smells—clean, sharp smells like this. But they've got to be wild; you can't tame a smell and put it on your handkerchief; it takes the life out of it. Do you like smells, Comber?"

"I—I really never thought about it," said Michael.

"Think now, then, and tell me," said Falbe. "If you consider, you know such a lot about me, and, as a matter of fact, I know nothing whatever about you. I know you like music—I know you like blue trout, because you ate so many of them at lunch to-day. But what else do I know about you? I don't even know what you thought of *Parsifal*. No, perhaps I'm wrong there, because the fact that you've never mentioned it probably shows that you couldn't."

"Ah! you've guessed right there," said Michael. "I couldn't talk about it; there's nothing to say about it, except that it is *Parsifal*."

"That's true. It becomes part of you. That's the glory of it all," he said; "that art and its emotions become part of you like the food you eat. Art is always making us; it enters into our character and destiny. As long as you go on growing you assimilate, and thank God one's mind or soul goes on growing for a long time. I suppose the moment comes to most people when they cease to grow, when they become fixed and hard; and that is what we mean by being old. But till then you weave your destiny. You must excuse me; but Germans are always metaphysicians, and they can't help it."

"Go on; be German," said Michael.

"Liebe Gott! As if I could be anything else," said Falbe, laughing. "We are the only nation which makes a science of experimentalism; we try everything, just as a puppy tries everything. It tries mutton bones, and match-boxes, and soap and boots; it tries to find out what its tail is for, and bites it till it hurts, on which it draws the conclusion that it is not meant to eat. Like all metaphysicians, too, and dealers in the abstract, we are intensely practical. Our passion for experimentalism is dictated by the firm object of using the knowledge we acquire. We are tremendously thorough; we waste nothing, not even time, whereas the English have an absolute genius for wasting time. Look at all your games, your sports, your athletics—I am being quite German now, and forgetting my mother, bless her!—they are merely devices for getting rid of the hours, and so not having to think. You hate thought as a nation, and we live for it. Music is thought; all art is thought; commercial prosperity is thought; soldiering is thought."

"And we are a nation of idiots?" asked Michael.

"No; I didn't say that. I should say you are a nation of sensualists. You value sensation above everything; you pursue the enjoyable. You are a nation of children who are always having a perpetual holiday. You go straying all over the world for fun, and annex it generally, so that you can have tiger-shooting in India, and lots of gold to pay for your tiger-shooting in Africa, and fur from Canada for your coats. But it's all a game; not one man in a thousand in England has any idea of Empire."

"Oh, I think you are wrong there," said Michael. "You believe that only because we don't talk about it. It's—it's like what we agreed about *Parsifal*. We don't talk about it because it is so much part of us."

Falbe sat up.

"I deny it; I deny it flatly," he said. "I know where I get my power of foolish, unthinking enjoyment from, and it's from my English blood. I rejoice in my English blood, because you are the happiest people on the face of the earth. But you are happy because you don't think, whereas the joy of being German is that you do think. England is lying in the shade, like us, with a cigarette and a golf ball with which she has been playing her game. But Germany is sitting up all night thinking, and every morning she gives an order or two."

"Do you mean she is thinking about England's golf ball?" asked Michael.

"Why, of course she is! What else is there to think about?"

"Oh, it's impossible that there should be a European war," said Michael, "for that is what it will mean!"

"And why is a European war impossible!" demanded Falbe.

"It's simply unthinkable!"

"Because you don't think," he interrupted. "I can tell you that the thought of war is never absent for a single day from the average German mind."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]



"Andrey struck with all the strength of his young arm"—*p.* 189.

Drawn by Cyrus Cuneo

The Home-Coming

An Episode of the Russian Christmas



Photo C. Bulla, Petrograd

By EVA BRETHERTON

IN the vast country of Russia, snow-wrapped as it is through long months of the year during which we ourselves seldom experience anything more severe than a prolonged autumn, and where distances have to be covered of which we seldom dream, the home-coming for the Christmas holidays from school or college in the great cities is often no small undertaking. That it is gone through year after year by so many students of both sexes illustrates the dauntless nature of the Russian people in their quest for the education they crave. The following true episode is one showing the risks to which these plucky young folk may be exposed.

It was a bitter day, cold even for Russia, when three days before Christmas (the Russian Christmas falls thirteen days later than ours) Andrey Molotzov, a lad of fifteen and a cadet at the Military Academy of Petrograd, set out on his journey of 700 miles to his home in Central Russia which he should reach early on the morning of Christmas Eve, in time for the festivities of that day. He was allowed, as is usual, sufficient money for travelling expenses, but very little more, and being a strong, capable lad to whom the journey was no new experience, left to make his way home as he chose.

The railway journey to Moscow occupied thirteen hours. Here there was a change and a wait of some hours before resuming the journey onward to the town which would be the rail terminus, the final stretch having to be covered by sleigh. Not caring to wait in the station Andrey wandered out into the city, pausing here and there to gaze at the brightly lighted shops.

He was just returning to the station when in the window of a book shop (a thing he could never pass!) his eye fell upon a beautifully illuminated copy of the "Life of St. Sergius." He caught his breath as he peered through the pane. What a Christmas present to take home to the mother! One that would please her above all things! Without further hesitation he turned into the shop and demanded the price. Twenty-five roubles! It seemed a good deal of money, but for such a beautiful thing, and for the mother too! Plunging his hand into his pocket he dragged out its contents and laid the price asked on the counter.

The treasure was carefully wrapped up and tucked away in an inner pocket of



Photo: C. Bulla, Petrograd.

Hand-sleighs on the Frozen Neva.

the heavy fur coat which he wore over his uniform, and he hurried back to the station, his blue eyes bright with pleasure under the astrakhan cap which covered his head.

Only as he put down the money for his ticket to Riazan (the rail terminus) did he discover that that and the purchase of the book had left him only five roubles with which to pay for his long sleigh journey of 150 miles on to Bylina, his home, which usually cost four times the amount! Here was a dilemma! But being Russian, and young at that, he did not give the question much thought. The railway journey was paid for anyhow. He climbed into the train, stretched himself out on a seat and went to sleep.

At Riazan, where he arrived early next morning, he sought first his breakfast and expended part of one of his last five roubles. Here, however, he met a friendly waiter, ready, as are most of such people in Russia, to discuss at any length the affairs of himself and his customers. Andrey being equally expansive, they were soon deep in the problem of the latter's journey, the four unbroken roubles laid out before them on the table.

"Ach!" said the waiter. "I don't know how it is to be done, Barin! A good 150 miles, as I know, for I come from that way myself! And the post sleighs, as you know, have their fixed price. Look you—why not go down into the Bazar and see what you can do? Doubtless there will be someone from the neighbourhood wishing to return for the Christmas and glad of a passenger. Try it, Barin."

It seemed the only thing possible. Andrey finished his breakfast, left his valise with the friendly waiter, and made his way to the Bazar (market-place), as suggested. Here he found the usual gathering of moujiks who had come in on their sledges from distant parts of the country, bringing earthenware pots, frozen carcasses of pigs, live ducks and geese, etc., to the Christmas market.

He had not much trouble in finding an old moujik—Peter Pavlitch by name—who had disposed of his wares and was about to return to his village a few miles from Andrey's home. A little bargaining, a friendly discussion of the circumstances, and he agreed to take the latter as passenger for the four roubles. He would have taken him for nothing as a matter of fact, for the Molotzov family was well known in the neighbourhood, and Andrey with his bright fair colouring and debonair manner was of the type dear to the moujik heart.

Still, the latter likes his little bit of bargaining. They shook hands on their, and Peter (a kindly faced old fellow clad in the usual sheepskin coat with a sash round the waist, fur cap and high felt boots) led his passenger to where the sledge stood—a rough, low-built, seatless affair with three horses driven abreast.

A few preparations, the throwing in of a bundle of fresh hay (in which to lie and seek shelter from the bitter cold), and with much cracking of the whip, many objurgations and entreaties to the horses, they were off. They called at the station

for Andrey's valise (being greeted triumphantly by the friendly waiter), made their way cautiously through the streets of the town, crowded with Christmas shoppers and other sledges, and were at last out on the open road—though a road in the usual sense of the word it could hardly be called, for, except when passing through forests, the track beaten in the snow seldom followed the line of the summer-time road, but made its own way across fields or along the frozen surfaces of rivers wherever it seemed most expedient or saved the greatest distance. But always, save where it rose from or fell to the course of a river, it followed the interminable level of the plains.

Dark fell about four. Shortly after they drew up at a lonely log cabin (or Isba) standing with its barns about it by the roadside. Peter Pavlitch climbed down, knocked on the door and asked admittance and shelter for his horses for an hour or two. While he stabled and fed the latter the sturdy peasant woman who had answered the door drew Andrey into the dimly lit interior of the Isba, motioning him to a place by the tall stove.

"You look cold, Barin!" she said sympathetically. "Sit you here while I see if the stchee (cabbage soup) is ready."

She opened the oven beneath the stove and drew out a great earthenware pot which emitted a savoury steam. A few minutes later Peter joined them with a lad who had helped him in the stable, and together they partook of a rough but comforting meal at the long trestle table, while the gossip of all the villages round was discussed by the three peasants.

Later, back in his place by the tall stove, Andrey fell asleep to the incessant sound of wagging tongues.

The horses who were to take the sledge the whole distance of 150 miles were obliged to be given rest, so that it was late, nine or ten at night, before Peter tapped the boy on the shoulder and told him it was time to start. Had he gone as he should have gone—by post sleigh, with frequent changes of horses—he would by now have been many hours farther on his journey. However, he was quite content. Climbing sleepily into the sledge to the sound of his hostess's parting good wishes he snuggled into the hay, drew his fur cap down over his head and sank back into sleep.



A Christmas Tree on the Ice.

Photo: C. Bellis, Petrograd.

It must have been a couple of hours later that he was awakened by a violent shaking of his arm.

"What is it?" he said drowsily, lifting his head.

"Awaken!" said his companion hoarsely. "Volki!" (wolves).

"Where?" he whispered. "It can't be!"

"Look!" said the old man dramatically.

Andrey peered into the darkness. He could see nothing but a pale stretch of snow, upon which stood the dark forms of pine-trees, outriders of the forest through whose borders they were passing. There was no moon and the sky was dark, but here and there among the trees he saw scattered stars.

"There's nothing!" he said, relieved. "Only snow and trees and stars!"

Peter laid the whip heavily across the backs of the horses and repeated hoarsely, "Volki!" Andrey looked again and realised suddenly that all the "stars" were *in pairs!* They were the eyes of many wolves!

He looked blankly towards the old man. "What can we do?" he said.

"Have you a knife?" Peter asked shortly.

The boy handed his pocket knife in silence. Hitching the reins over his arm for a moment Peter deftly lashed it, open, to the butt of his whip, forming a short spear. As he worked he muttered to himself.

"Accursed spot! Never before would I pass this place in the darkness! It was only that I wished to be home for the Christmas—there!" He laid his improvised spear down for a moment, and drawing from his belt the chopper which every moujik invariably carries, handed it to Andrey.

"Kneel down," he commanded, "and when they come within reach strike!"

He turned away, and first taking off his cap and reverently crossing himself with the brief words "It is with God!" he gathered up the reins in one hand, the reversed whip-handle in the other, and gave his whole attention to the controlling of the horses, who, aware of the wolves' proximity, had become frightened and restive.

Andrey, behind him, peered out into the darkness where those ominous stars grew ever brighter. He too crossed himself and breathed the simple words which are not so much a prayer as the placing of one's



A New Motor Snow Sleigh.

Photo: C. Bulla, Petrograd.



A Russian Christmas in the House of the Governor of Petrograd.

Photo: C. Bulla, Petrograd.

life in the hands of the Almighty. The silence was broken now and the forest seemed full of the terrifying howls of the pursuing beasts—howls which were answered every now and then by the panic-stricken shriek of one or other of the horses as they galloped onward at ever madder speed.

But with every effort of man and horses, it was clear that they were not gaining on their pursuers. Suddenly on either side a pair of shadowy grey forms dashed from the main pack and raced forward parallel with the flying horses. The moment had come. The sides of the trap were set, ready to close in upon what seemed like the doomed sledge and its occupants. Andrey scarcely breathed.

Then the shadowy forms leapt with one accord toward the horses. And at that instant Peter dexterously dealt each of the three animals in succession a sharp stab with his improvised spear. They sprang wildly forward, as they were meant to do, and the hungry forms on either side fell back snarling among the pack.

For a few minutes the grim pursuit went on again.

"Have we a chance?" Andrey shouted into Peter's ear.

"God knows! But if He would but give us a couple more versts there is a hamlet thereabouts where we could shelter. Ach! The accursed ones!"

A second time shadowy forms closed in and leapt. A second time also old Peter by a supreme effort foiled the attack. But as, carried by the plunge of the horses, the sledge swept past, one of the wolves falling back to join the pack leapt again, this time at the boy in the back of the sledge.

The cruel jaws missed his flesh, but caught and held firmly the skirt of his fur coat. For an instant it seemed as if all was over and he must be dragged to death. Then, mercifully, the coat—an old one—tore away from the waist. Recovering his balance Andrey struck with all the strength of his young arm and the weight of the chopper it wielded at the head of the wolf which

for another second still hung suspended across the edge of the sledge.

The blow was a good one. It split the wicked skull, the jaws relaxed, and a moment later the beast fell away, dead, to the ground.

It was the turning point. With a high pitched howl of blood-lust the rest of the pack abandoned the pursuit for the time being and fell simultaneously upon the body of their companion, snapping viciously at one another in their greed and fury the while.



A Typical Snow Sleigh.

Photo: Topical.

"Brave fellow!" said old Peter admiringly. "It is right that your name should be Molotzov!" (a brave man). Then he turned to his horses, and with the intimate words of encouragement that a Russian knows so well how to use to his animals, he urged the tired, terrified creatures onward again towards the hamlet which he knew should be not far away by now.

For five or ten minutes they galloped in silence. Then once more the two who stood with straining ears heard again that ominous bell-like note which indicates a running pack. The pursuit was resumed, though as yet far distant.

Another five minutes—and the bell-like cry drew ever nearer. What if Peter were wrong and no hamlet stood hereabouts! Ah!——

Both man and boy drew a sobbing breath as, round a bend of the road, appeared the dusky group of an Isba and its buildings standing darkly under the trees. They were saved!

They dashed up to the great wooden gates in the stout palisade enclosing the yard. Andrey jumped down, ran to them, found thankfully that they were not fastened inside, lifted the latch, and without any further urging the exhausted horses rushed to welcome safety as the gates were slammed-to behind them.

For a second Andrey and his companion looked each other in the face through the gloom. The boy became conscious that his knees were rather shaky, and the old man's voice was not quite steady as, pushing his fur cap back from his brow, he said tersely, "Vspotel!" (I sweat!).

The tension thus characteristically relieved, both turned to the East and again crossed themselves.

The rest of the night seemed all confusion to the overtired boy—a dim recollection of much talk, excited question and comment on the part of the hurriedly awakened occupants of the Isba, explanations many times repeated on his part and Peter's. To this perpetual chorus the inevitable stchee was warmed and served with hunches of bread and bowls of Kvass. Through it all, the balked wolves howled and shrieked to the darkness outside, and the frightened horses answered them from the stables. Only with the coming of dawn did the wolves slink away into the forest, and silence with the possibility of rest fell upon the cabin.

They started again about midday, rested and refreshed, and sent on their way with

the noisily expressed good wishes of the whole community, which had gathered to hear the news of their startling arrival. Andrey went doubly protected from any evil that might befall him by a tiny gilt cross hung round his neck by one of the daughters of the house, who had fallen in love as much with his blue eyes and bright crisp hair as with his prowess in slaying the wolf.

However, although their late start would entail a very late arrival at Bylina that night, Peter did not anticipate having to pass after dark any district where wolves would be likely to be encountered, and as a matter of fact the day passed without adventure.

It was many hours after nightfall that they reached familiar surroundings, and at last turned in at the wrought-iron gates of the Molotzov estate, lying a little apart from the village. As they passed up the long dark avenue, shaded by its great trees, and came suddenly in sight of the mansion, they saw that the windows were brightly lighted up, and heard the sweet sound of singing floating out into the night.

"Listen!" said old Peter. "They hold the special service now!"

Andrey nodded. "I am not too late after all! Go thou round and stable the horses, while I creep in. The mother will be pleased that I am in time."

He leapt eagerly down, and feeling in the inner pocket to make sure that the precious gift (which indirectly had so nearly cost him his life) was safe, he slipped round to a little side door he knew of, softly opened it and stole in.

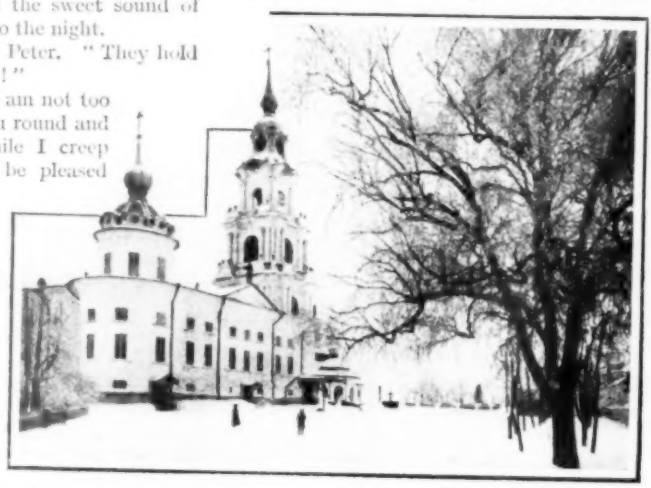
No one was about, for, as he knew, all the servants with their friends and relations from the village would be gathered with the family and friends of the Barin himself in the room where the customary Christmas Eve service was being held and to which the sound of singing led him.

The door stood ajar and he pushed it open and went quietly in.

The great room was one blaze of light. Evergreens decked its walls, and candles flickered in sconces everywhere. On the table, not yet touched, was spread the Christmas Eve feast. At one end of the room stood the priest; at a little distance were gathered the family of the Barin and their guests, behind them the dependents and villagers—a homely group with honest, shining faces.

For a moment no one saw Andrey, and dazzled by the light he could not distinguish the figures of his father and mother amongst the rest. Then he saw them, the former tall and broad-shouldered with his strong calm face, the latter looking gentle and sweet as ever, but pale and anxious. Her eyes were bent upon the book in her hand, but as Andrey looked at her she raised them suddenly and they met those of her boy. She started, and a glad light sprang into her face. She beckoned to him, holding out one hand, and he slipped through the crowd to her side.

For one moment her eyes devoured him.



The Historical Uspensky Cathedral in Kostroma.

Photo: C. Bulla, Petrograd.

Then she pressed him to her while the sweet clear voices of the choir broke out into the words of the Christmas chant:

"Glory to God in the highest,
On earth peace and goodwill towards men."

A moment later Peter Pavlitch joined the group, and together as one great family they knelt for the final benediction.



Drawn by
E. S. Hodgson.

"'Egad, Mr. Broken Parole and Miss Rosamund,' he cried. 'The babes in the wood!'"—*p.* 201.

Long Complete Story

PETTIFER'S PLEDGE

The Story of a Prisoner of War

By H. HALYBURTON ROSS

CHAPTER I

COMMANDER RICHARD PETTIFER

NAVAL OFFICERS were frequent guests at Wymerling Manor, which lies on the hills above Portsmouth, during the French Revolutionary wars. Squire Peter Carew was an ardent patriot for one thing, hating the Corsican Usurper as he abhorred the Evil One; for another, he had a marriageable daughter, Mistress Rosamund Carew, the fairest, most witching maid in all Hampshire. The girl was in a fair way to be spoiled by the attentions she received.

But her parents had ambitions for her beyond any prospective admiral of the Red, White or Blue. Her future husband must have family connections as well warranted to ensure a high social position for his wife.

With this end they had encouraged the advances of that sternest, most taciturn officer of the Fleet, Commander the Honourable Richard Pettifer, eldest son of Lord Bracefield, who would some day succeed to the barony and that palatial residence in the midlands, Bracefield Chase.

Upon their first acquaintance with him they had had no thought of such a development—his misogynist principles were too well known. But the young beauty's lofty and indifferent airs and her open disregard for his material advantages had a contrary effect on the blunt sailor, used to the cloying attentions of the fair sex. His interest was aroused, his amour propre piqued. He became a frequent visitor at Wymerling.

It was soon apparent to the delighted parents what the attentions signified, though his intimacy with the girl herself progressed hardly at all; during this period their relations, indeed, seemed to become increasingly strained and formal. Then, one day, when parental expectancy had reached an almost intolerable pitch, he quietly informed Peter Carew of his ambitions, and was joyfully accepted by the squire as a son-in-law.

It was Mistress Carew who brought the tidings to her daughter—seated at her tapestry frame under the spacious shadow of the beech tree on the lawn. She was not without certain misgivings in her task, knowing the girl's wilful nature and the equally resolute calibre of her husband's will.

But she was not prepared for the scornful repulse with which she was met. In vain she dilated on the tempting advantages to accrue to her daughter from such a match. There was the same ominous flash in Mistress Rosamund's eyes as she had so often seen in the frosty blue ones of the squire when fired with opposition zeal, and her heart sank at the prospect of the trouble that might accrue to all of them from the situation.

"I shall never marry Richard Pettifer," had been the girl's concluding dictum, "not if he was to be a duke. How could I love such a cruel tyrant of a man?"

"He is a first-rate officer." Mistress Carew defended him.

"Yes, notorious for his harshness and unscrupulousness," cried Rosamund. "Did he not kill a poor labouring man in the streets of Portsmouth the other night during the impress?"

"He was but doing his duty—the fellow had tried to escape," championed her mother.

"To say nothing of his treatment of the French," the girl persisted, ignoring the interruption. "His prison ship is more dreaded than all the others." Involuntarily her eyes had travelled as she spoke to the westward, where the square keep of Portchester Castle rose up beside the sparkling water of the estuary not a mile from where they sat. It was behind those grim walls that eight thousand or more prime seamen and soldiers of the Napoleonic wars were detained—the rich harvest of La Vendée,

of Quiberon, and Castlebar. Thousands more were held captive in the old hulks in the harbour, one of which prison ships Richard Pettifer commanded.

"I believe your sympathies are with the French," cried Mistress Carew at last, exasperated beyond endurance by the girl's contumacy. "It was an ill day for all of us that I allowed you to visit your cousins at St. Cyr."

Rosamund's face had paled a little at the allusion, but her lips were firmly set.

The said visit had taken place three years previously, when she was but a girl of seventeen, but it had had consequences on her life of which her mother knew nothing.

A younger sister of the squire had, in early life, married a Frenchman, the Comte du Maunay, and it was at their request that Rosamund had at last crossed the Channel to make the acquaintance of her unknown cousins and perfect her knowledge of the French language. But other more far-reaching events had attended the visit.

While at St. Cyr she had met and fallen in love with Armand de Montmorency, a distant connection of the Count, who was a frequent visitor at the château during her stay. The young Frenchman's ardent Gallic temperament and romantic beauty found an easy conquest in the unsophisticated English girl, and aware of his own financial disabilities as a suitor, he had taken care to conduct his love-making secretly. The clandestine touch in the affair heightened the romance for Rosamund, and when she returned to England she had maintained the same reserved attitude towards her parents.

For almost a year the lovers corresponded, then abruptly Armand's letters had ceased. Rosamund gathered incidentally from her cousins that he had joined Napoleon's expedition to Egypt, and at first consoled herself that his silence was due to the difficulties of the campaign. But as the months passed and she still received no word, another interpretation forced itself on her unwilling consciousness.

She had now an additional motive for concealing her love affair from her parents, and it spoke well for her pride and high spirit that she got through the humiliating period without raising their suspicions.

"La! girl, pull yourself together; here is your father coming with Richard Pettifer," cried Mistress Carew suddenly.

Two figures had emerged from the old red house with its quaint gables and tiled roof—the squire, pompous, dignified, his choleric face abeam with satisfaction; his guest, of middle height and powerful build, in the blue and white of his naval uniform, and wearing that dogged, imperturbable air that so offended Mistress Rosamund's susceptibilities.

"My child"—Peter Carew laid his hand possessively on his daughter's arm as the two women rose at their approach—"your mother will have prepared you for the honour that Captain Pettifer has done you. I need not say how proud and gratified I am at the prospect," half turning towards his future son-in-law as he spoke.

The latter made a dissenting, rather awkward gesture.

"The honour will be mine if Mistress Rosamund will consent to receive my addresses," he said, speaking in a harsh, somewhat metallic voice that yet had a deep ring of virility in its sound.

There was a pause, during which Mistress Carew's motherly heart almost ceased beating. At last, raising her blue eyes calmly, defiantly to her suitor's face, the girl spoke.

"If I do consent," she said, "it will never be by my own wish."

The words fell like a thunderbolt on the group; even her mother was not prepared for quite such an outspoken defiance, while the squire, purple with indignation, could not at first command himself to speak. Richard Pettifer, the one most concerned, appeared the least disturbed. His hand had gone up to his shaven lips; was it to hide a smile?

"Rebellious, unmannerly wench!" Peter Carew's wrath exploded at last. "Apologise at once to Captain Pettifer for your effrontery, or you leave my house to-night."

Rosamund received his onslaught calmly. Her childish face was very pale, but her head was held high, and there was a dangerous gleam in her eyes.

Before, however, she could reply, Richard Pettifer intervened.

"If you would allow me a few moments' private conversation with Mistress Rosamund," he said, laying his hand quietly on the arm of his perturbed host.

The girl's opposition had not in any sense deflected his purpose; it had rather whetted his determination. But he was too innately chivalrous to see a woman browbeaten, especially the woman of his choice.

"Yes, let us leave them," said Mistress

Carew, seizing eagerly at this opportunity for ending an unpleasant situation. She took hold of her husband's arm as she spoke, dragging him with her towards the house. The squire suffered himself to be led away, still muttering threats and maledictions against his unruly daughter.

Pettifer waited until their figures had disappeared, then he drew up a chair for the girl standing white and petrified before him. She sank into it, hardly realising how thankful she was for the relief to her trembling limbs.

He remained standing beside her.

"I acknowledge my action in this matter has been sudden," he began at last; "but it is a characteristic of mine not to beat about the bush. I know what I want and I go straight for it."

"Irrespective of the feelings of your victims," Rosamund replied very low. Her eyes were gazing out over the panoramic expanse of historic coastline before her—the harbour, with its branching channels and the ships of war riding at anchor on its waters, the clustering roofs of Portsmouth, and, farther, Spithead and the wooded north shore of the Isle of Wight sloping gently to the Solent, till it terminated at St. Helen's Point. But she was not thinking of the scene before her.

"Your refusal hasn't made any difference to my—my wishes," he furthered, ignoring her low-spoken words.

"Or your intentions," she flashed scornfully.

He shook his head.

"I fear not."

She leapt up at that, turning on him.

"Then you shall see that others can be as determined as you. You use your personal advantages, your money, your position as a lever, through my parents' ambition, to bend me to your will, just as you do your authority in the navy to browbeat those beneath you. But remember this, engaged we may be by my father's decree, yet until I am actually forced into marriage with you I regard myself as free."

He gazed at her while she was speaking with a curious mingling of surprise, amusement and admiration in his eyes. But at her concluding sentence his expression hardened.

"I pledge you my word you shall never be forced into marriage with me," he declared with a short laugh. "I would not accept a wife on those terms."

"Then why——" Rosamund broke off bewildered.

"You shall come to me willingly when you do come," he supplemented quietly.

It was the girl's turn to laugh.

"You are very certain of yourself, Captain Pettifer."

The contempt in her eyes as they swept him from head to foot would have disconcerted a less assured suitor.

"As certain as it is possible for a man to be of anything under Providence," he retorted in the same low, unprovoked tone. There was not a trace of boasting in his manner, but a calm, inflexible determination that incensed Rosamund almost beyond endurance.

"You think you can browbeat me as you do your prisoners," she cried, her temporary self-control vanishing, "or perhaps you would go greater lengths, as you do with your victims of the press-gang."

The words were out almost before she was aware, and for an instant she shrank from the cold, steady anger that the taunt had evoked in his eyes. The next moment he had controlled himself.

"It may interest you to know that the fellow Silas Brothers who was killed in the scuffle the other night did not die by my hand," he remarked quietly, "though, if he had——" He broke off with a shrug.

"Your press warrant would have exonerated you," supplemented Rosamund, urged by a still further desire to make him suffer, to goad him to retort, but her endeavour failed of its effect.

He smiled.

"Assuredly."

A few minutes later he took his leave.

"Your parents have invited me to dine here on this day week," he added. "Other duties and engagements will prevent me from seeing you before then—and, by the way, your betrothal ring; I will bring it with me then. What stone do you prefer?"

The calm assumption of the last words staggered Rosamund for a moment. After all that had passed between them, her taunts and insults, to be still as doggedly set as ever on his purpose, it was amazing, incredible. Was it lack of pride or overweening self-confidence that inspired him? she asked herself. At all events, resistance had proved useless. She would meet him with his own weapons.

"Yellow's forsaken, green's forsworn," she quoted lightly; "let it be emeralds."

He bowed.

"My favourite stone." And with an abrupt salute he turned and strode back towards the house.

As his stalwart figure disappeared the girl sank into a chair. The interview had left her in a half-dazed condition; her vitality was literally used up by the contest, and to think of such a state of things becoming permanent, of passing her life in open hostility with that unyielding adamantine personality—she laughed at the mere idea, then shuddered. He had shown her only one side of his character as yet, but there would of necessity be another. The day would come when he would exert his lover's prerogatives; the bare idea seemed a desecration of those memories sacred still of her first acquaintance with romance. The dark, dreamy eyes of her young French lover gazed into hers again, his voice, low and tender, sounded in her ears.

She started up. Never, never would she be the wife of Richard Pettifer. Then she remembered his pledge: he had vowed she should not be forced into marriage with him, and, hate him as she might, she somehow felt that she could trust him. Again she laughed. Why distress herself in the face of such a security? Life smiled once more.

She was about to turn back to the house, when her eye was caught by something moving in the bay beneath her. A boat had shot out suddenly from the shore, and was gliding swiftly across the shining waters of the estuary—a naval cutter manned by bluejackets. She could see the rhythmic stroke of the oars as they pulled towards the harbour. In the stern was a cloaked figure.

Commander the Honourable Richard Pettifer—her betrothed, she laughed—never to be her husband.

CHAPTER II

THE PRISONERS OF PORTCHESTER

MISTRESS CAREW had a kind and motherly heart towards all distress. From the first her sympathies had been evoked for the victims of war enduring exile and imprisonment so close to her own doors, and she had sought in various ways to alleviate the hardships of their lot, enemies of her country though they were.

The adoption of the fortress of Portchester as a depot for prisoners had revolutionised those once peaceful environs of Portsmouth. The mere consciousness of the teeming life pent behind its grim walls had a disturbing effect on the minds of the dwellers in the neighbourhood, while in a hundred more definite ways their occupation made itself known.

A regiment of militia had been stationed at the castle to guard the prisoners, and all day long, from reveille to "lights out," the sounds of military activity floated to the quiet garden of the Manor. Other sounds, less ordered and regular, could be heard at times—the hoarse singing and shouting of the captives as they joined hands and danced defiance to their enemies to the tune of "Ca Ira" or "La Carmagnole."

"Dansons la Carmagnole.
Vive le son!
Vive le son!
Dansons la Carmagnole.
Vive le son
Du canon!"

But that was generally when a fresh batch of prisoners had been landed at the castle. It was wonderful with what stoicism and philosophy those who had been incarcerated for some time resigned themselves to the tedium and hardships of their lot, displaying a remarkable ingenuity in devising occupations to while away the weary hours. Among these was the manufacture of knick-knacks, models of ships and chessmen carved from beef bones, the braiding of work-boxes and dinner mats out of the straw of their beds, and the making of thread lace, all of which found a ready sale among the felicity hunters of the neighbourhood.

Once a week the cleverly made wares were exhibited on stalls in the great central quadrature and the castle was thrown open to the public, the villagers of Portchester and Cosham mingling freely with the country ladies and gentlemen and the naval and military officers and their wives who had driven out the five miles from Portsmouth to be present at the sale.

The day following Rosamund's betrothal was the occasion of such a gathering, and Mistress Carew and her daughter had as usual repaired to the scene. Already their kindly tact and graciousness had won many hearts among the prisoners, the girl especially by her beauty and secret sympathy with the nationality of the captives arousing their devotion. She could speak their language, too, with ease and fluency, an advantage which her mother lacked.



"'But remember this . . . until I am actually forced into marriage with you I regard myself as free.'"—*p.* 195.

Drawn by
E. S. Hodgson.

and many were the ardent glances of admiration that followed her dainty figure as she passed from stall to stall.

On this occasion they were attended as usual by the Captain of the Guard, Denis O'Leary, whose susceptible Irish affection had fallen an easy prey to the young beauty's seductions. The pair had become separated from Mistress Carew in the throng, and were wandering on heedless and absorbed by the shifting kaleidoscope of figures around them.

Rosamund had paused for an instant at a stall on which was displayed some of the exquisite thread lace whose large output was already arousing the jealousy of English manufacturers.

"I must learn how to make it," she cried as she passed the cobwebby texture enviously through her fingers.

"Sure and certain one of the rascals here would be only too proud to show you," replied the captain gallantly. He was rapidly forecasting in his mind the increased opportunities for meeting his lady-love that would result from the tuition. "If you wait here a moment I'll go and find Jacques Sere," he added; "he is the finest worker we have." And without more ado he turned and vanished in the crowd.

Left alone, the girl's glance wandered curiously over the motley gathering around her. It was, indeed, a strange and varied scene that the old grey walls of Portchester looked down upon that day—the groups of prisoners in their canary-coloured habits, Sansculotte and secret Royalist, veteran warriors and young aristocratic victims of Republican tyranny, the scarlet tunics of the English soldiery interspersed among them, and, more numerous still, the heterogeneous throng of sightseers.

A voice at her elbow made her start. A country woman, with a flat, open basket of fruit and vegetables strapped before her, had pushed against her accidentally and was soliciting pardon.

The settled sadness of the woman's face and the deep black of her clothing, relieved only by the white apron, aroused Rosamund's interest. She addressed her with a few gracious words.

"What beautiful, fresh fruit!"

The woman smiled.

"They are all grown in my sister's garden in Portchester, my lady. But I am new to this kind of work; I have not learned how to push my wares."

"You are a widow?" queried Rosamund sympathetically.

The woman's face hardened.

"My husband was killed in Portsmouth three weeks ago in the impress," she returned in a low voice.

Rosamund's colour faded at the words; she clutched at the stall for support.

"Then you—you are Mrs. Brothers," she faltered. "I—I think I heard of your husband's death."

"Yes, my lady. He had gone to see his sister who has a tavern at Point, and was returning home late, when he was overcome by the impress. He tried to escape, knowing it would mean five years' forced service if he were taken, and starvation for his wife and children, but they shot him dead."

"And you—you are left penniless," furthered Rosamund. A sick sense of revulsion was surging within her against the perpetrators of the deed, and especially the one who, whether he had fired the shot or no, was directly responsible for it.

"Yes, my lady," Mrs. Brothers assented. "At first I could think of no means of livelihood. Then my sister at Portchester suggested I and my little ones should live with her, and that I should become a hawker for the prisoners here and on the prison ships."

"Oh, I am glad," cried Rosamund impulsively. "Then you will be near us. I live at Wymerling Manor. I will come and see you often, and here"—taking a gold piece from her purse and offering it; but Mrs. Brothers drew back.

"I am in no immediate need, my lady," she explained; "thanks to an unknown friend from whom I received a gift of money shortly after my husband's death. It was a handsome sum, and will keep me and my children for some time."

At this moment the return of Captain O'Leary interrupted their altercation. He was accompanied by a tall, cadaverous man in prison garb, with a sallow, whimsical face and bright, restless eyes.

"Dufresne at your service, mademoiselle," said the new-comer without waiting for an introduction, touching his "bonnet rouge" as he spoke. "I know the secret of the lace as well as my comrade Jacques Sere, and will sell it to you gladly for the price of"—he broke off, casting his black eyes audaciously round him—"for the price of——"

"For no price at all, you rascal; you should be ashamed of driving bargains with the lady," interrupted O'Leary hotly.

But Rosamund only laughed.

"I will gladly pay Monsieur Dufresne," she returned, "anything in reason."

"I have a desire for a trip to London," the Frenchman continued, no whit abashed by the officer's reproof. "'Twould be pleasanter to travel by chaise than on foot."

A shout of laughter greeted the sally from some of the bystanders who had paused, attracted by the colloquy. Dufresne had already made himself notorious by his daring attempts to escape. Thrice had the great bell at the castle clanged out the alarm for his disappearance, awakening the sleeping villagers, and carrying the news for twenty miles up and down the country, though his efforts had so far only resulted in recapture.

Mistress Carew's arrival at this juncture prevented Rosamund from replying.

"La! child, I have been searching for you everywhere," she exclaimed in a reproachful tone. "Here is Monsieur Armand, who has but lately arrived at the castle and desires your services as interpreter."

Rosamund turned her laughing eyes to the new-comer, and as she did so for the second time that day the fugitive colour retreated from her face. Monsieur Armand, in prison garb, Armand de Montmorency, the friend, the lover of her youth, whose personality had been so forcibly presented to her imagination only the previous day! But the dark eyes opposite had telegraphed their warning, and with a mighty effort she recovered herself.

"I was taken aback—I once knew a Monsieur Armand," she faltered.

Mistress Carew accepted the explanation reservedly. She was not quite satisfied with this solution of her daughter's agitation. But being of a trustful and unimaginative nature, she speedily forgot her momentary suspicions.

Rosamund and the young Frenchman meanwhile were launched on a voluble interchange of civilities which conveyed no suggestion of the emotional undercurrents both were experiencing, and, deceived by the superficial nature of their intercourse, Mistress Carew moved away to accost a passing acquaintance.

No sooner was her back turned than the pair dropped their conventional address.

"I must see you alone—let us walk on," murmured Armand in a low tone.

Mechanically Rosamund assented, and in as casual a manner as possible they commenced to wander forward.

As they walked he detailed in rapid French the history of the events that had led to his capture. The corvette in which he was sailing to Ireland with other troops had been waylaid in the Channel by two English frigates and after a short resistance overcome and made captive.

"My only consolation was that I should be near you, mademoiselle," he concluded. "I remembered your descriptions of the great English fortress near your home when you were at St. Cyr."

The reference brought a deep flush into Rosamund's face. All her old feelings had revived at the sight of her lover, or so she believed. But before resuming their former intimacy her pride demanded an explanation of his silence.

"Your memory is longer than I should have supposed, monsieur," she replied in a little reticent, haughty voice.

It was Armand's turn to flush—he bit his lip—casting a furtive, half-guilty glance at the pale, exquisitely modelled profile by his side. The next instant he had mastered his agitation.

"Ah, mademoiselle, if you knew all," he sighed, "all I have suffered you would not reproach me thus. I was wounded in Egypt, for long my life was despaired of; when I recovered my chances of honour and promotion were vanished, I was just a poor soldier of fortune. What right had I to aspire to one so richly favoured as you? I longed to write to you, to crave at least your sympathy and understanding, but my pride forbade me; I told myself that doubtless even then you were affianced to another—perhaps wed."

He cast a covert glance as he finished at the girl's left hand, which rested lightly on the beribboned handle of her ebony walking-stick.

Rosamund felt the glance, and a half-guilty, half-triumphant pang shot through her—a week later and the tell-tale green circlet would have encompassed her finger. Was she justified in reserving the news of her betrothal? she asked herself; surely at least for the present, surely it was fate that had brought her lover back into her life just at this crisis.

To avoid further decision she began to

question him eagerly about his life at Portchester, the conditions of his imprisonment. He made no effort to conceal his abhorrence for his present surroundings: the coarse, scant fare, the noisome dungeon in which he was lodged, the ribald company of his associates.

"I could not survive it for long," he concluded. "I am not of the same clay as some of these others, and who knows how many years——" He broke off with an eloquent gesture.

Rosamund was silent for a moment. The contrast between her lover's situation and her own luxurious surroundings made her heart ache and the tears smart in her eyes. A passionate desire to succour him rose within her.

"But you can escape," she exclaimed at last in a low voice, lifting her inspired gaze to his face. "Others have succeeded, why not you? I will help you."

Already a hundred schemes for his liberation teemed within her brain.

He caught eagerly at the suggestion. It was the very development for which he had longed though hardly dared to hope, considering his treatment of her.

"There is the Priests' Hole at the Manor," the girl ran on in the same low, fervent tones, "it is a sort of cave in the hill-side, the entrance is in the garden. I will tell you how to find it, and you could lie hid there till I had arranged some means of getting you out of the country."

The memory of the lace-making lessons so carelessly projected earlier in the afternoon had flashed into her mind as she spoke. How fruitful a means of communication with her lover they might prove if only she could gain her mother's consent to the plan, but for the present she reserved the mention of them. The caution of the practised conspirator had descended on her.

At that moment Armand's warning voice interrupted her cogitations.

"Madame, your mother," he said, "she is coming towards us."

CHAPTER III

THE PLOT

DURING the days that followed Rosamund lived in a new world of hazardous undertaking, of plotting and intrigue, of hairbreadth risks and the thrill of possible discovery.

The idea of Armand's liberation obsessed her to the exclusion of every other consideration. It was the most gloriously romantic sequel to her love affair that could have been imagined, and she brought to it all the pent-up emotions and energies of those three years of silence and repression.

Even the fact of her betrothal faded into nothingness, the week that had been fated to elapse between her first and second meeting with Richard Pettifer seemed specially designed to favour her plans. She refused to think beyond it; Armand's return into her life had metamorphosed her whole outlook, anything now was possible—she was prepared, ready at every point.

Mistress Carew's consent to the lace-making lessons had been obtained only by an exercise of this new found talent for intrigue on her daughter's part. At first she had resolutely refused to countenance the idea, but Rosamund's artful innuendoes in regard to her trousseau and the superior advantages of home-made trimmings and embroideries so gratified her that she yielded without another demur.

The venture had proved even more fruitful of result than the girl dared hope: on each of her visits to the castle she had contrived to have a few words with her lover and, better still, had slipped unobserved into his hand various aids to his escape—at one time it was a package of gold pieces, at another a small file or chisel or sharp-bladed knife, or merely a scrap of paper containing instructions how he was to proceed in the event of escape, with maps of the surrounding country and landmarks to guide his course which she had painstakingly compiled.

From Dufresne, while he was initiating her into the mysteries of the lace, she had learned much incidentally of that science of "French leave" in which the irrepressible foreigner was such an adept. He was never tired of expatiating on his methods of escape, and had even under the very nose of Captain O'Leary, who was always in close attendance at these times, and her old nurse Martha, demonstrated how, on one occasion, in the dead of night, by the removal of a large flat stone from under his prison door, he had crawled out, passing within a few inches of the sentry's feet and thus gained the little staircase which led to the summit of the castle wall. From thence by means of his hammock—previously converted into a

thumb line—he had let himself down and escaped into the open country.

But whereas Dufresne was forced to prowl friendless and penniless and in the neighbouring forests until retaken, Armand would have a friend outside to co-operate in his venture and assist him to ultimate victory. So the girl argued, stifling those pangs of conscience which assailed her at times, despite all her reckless assurance, for thus conniving at the escape of an enemy of her country. Nor had she forgotten in the stress and anxiety of the undertaking her promise to Mrs. Brothers.

Already the humble household at Portchester had had a taste of the benefits that accrue from the patronage of a wealthy and influential family such as that at the Manor. Mistress Carew's motherly sympathies had been easily evoked for the unfortunate victim of the impress, and many a hamper of good things as well as clothes and money found their way to the quaint little dwelling on the waterside. One only stipulation she had made, that her philanthropy should be kept secret from her husband and Richard Pettifer, and to this condition Rosamund had readily agreed. In some mysterious way the tragedy seemed to be linked with the web of circumstance in which she was involved, and had she but known it was destined to play a yet more important part in the development of events.

She had called at the cottage one afternoon with a message from her mother, and found her protégée in a strangely agitated state. It was Mary Brothers' day for visiting the prison ships in the harbour, and scarcely had Rosamund appeared than she burst forth tempestuously:

"They had me searched. It was the first time—that man commanded it, he stood by while it was done, and I heard him give orders that the custom was to be repeated."

"But who—what man?" queried the girl, amused and yet mystified by the outburst.

"Commander Richard Pettifer, of H.M.S. *Vigilant*," returned the other contemptuously. "I did not know it was his ship. I had never seen him before, though I have longed to often enough," she broke off significantly.

A hot flush had mounted into Rosamund's face at mention of her betrothed's name; it was impossible, of course, that Mrs. Brothers could know of the relations in which he stood to her, nor did she see the necessity of enlightening her, but something in the woman's words and manner of speaking required elucidation.

"Why—why were you so curious about him?" she faltered.

A stony expression had converted Mrs. Brothers's usually gentle countenance at her interrogation.

"He was in command of the impress that night," she said in a lower yet more bitter tone, her eyes staring before her.

"Did he realise your identity?" Rosamund continued in the same faltering tone.

Mrs. Brothers laughed harshly.

"I think not; all he was concerned with was that I should be properly searched. He does not mean to risk another scandal like the escape of the three captives from the *Swiftsure* last week; it would be a disgrace to one with his reputation to be caught napping."

Rosamund shuddered at the bitterness of her tone. The incident, too, had brought home to her with sudden force the seriousness of her own action in regard to Armand de Montmorency, and the light in which her betrothed would regard it. Instinctively her eyes turned to the frowning walls of the fortress prison dominating the straggling village at their foot—were Richard Pettifer in command at Portchester her schemes would have scant chance of success, she told herself, then her hands clenched—the realisation seemed like a challenge, making her more desperately set on her venture.



And now the week of tension and excitement was over.

The dreaded evening had at last arrived which was to bring Richard Pettifer back to the Manor and with him the pledge of Rosamund's betrothal. She had successfully banished the thought of the ordeal during the week, being concerned with other more engrossing matters. But now the full realisation of what his visit portended swept over her in force. If the thought of his love-making had repelled her a week ago it was doubly obnoxious today. How could she submit to his overtures with her whole heart and mind centred on another? No, by some ruse she must frustrate his intentions for this one occasion. Who could tell what the morrow would bring forth?

By the time the evening arrived the

strain of her anticipations was clearly visible in her face. Her parents attributed her unusual pallor to a natural excitement at the prospect before her. But as she looked in the glass before descending to the drawing-room, a sudden fear assailed the girl for the interpretation a certain pair of grey, observant eyes might place upon her altered looks.

As it turned out her anxiety proved groundless; in the first moments of his arrival Pettifer hardly glanced at her, bowing stiffly over her hand and immediately averting his gaze. He, too, seemed to have been passing through matriculating experiences during the week that was gone, to judge by the look of strain about his eyes and the curious mottled hue of his usually bronzed face. He was in uniform, the mess dress of those days, and even to Rosamund's eyes the severe blue and gold and immaculately powdered hair lent an unusual distinction to his appearance.

She had ample leisure to indulge her curiosity regarding his altered looks during the opening courses of dinner, as he confined his remarks exclusively to her parents, telling in his brusque sailor fashion of his doings in the past week, or commenting on the war and the latest tactics of the all-conquering Bonaparte.

Later Mistress Carew took up the thread and enlarged innocently on their recent visit to Portchester and the lace-making lessons of Rosamund.

An instant change was observable in the guest's demeanour as he listened. The old steel-like gleam appeared in his eyes, mouth and jaw became doggedly set.

"Hardly a politic proceeding I should think," he commented harshly, turning from his hostess to the squire, red and perturbed at the foot of the table. There was no mistaking the displeasure in his tone.

Husband and wife exchanged glances of consternation.

"We saw no harm in it," exclaimed Peter Carew hastily. "The girl was set on learning the secret of the lace, and on each of her visits to the castle was attended by her maid; of course, if you disapprove we will put a stop to them."

A slightly mollified expression crossed Pettifer's face at his last words.

"The truth is, captain," furthered Mistress Carew, leaning forward with a little meaning smile, "the child desires to make the trimmings for her own trousseau."

A portentous silence followed her declaration.

The dusky flush that had mounted the guest's embarrassed face at her words faded slowly, leaving it ashen pale. As for Rosamund, her heart seemed to have stopped beating. A wild longing to start up and refute the allegation surged within her, to declare that not one stitch of her trousseau would she make; in fact, that no trousseau would ever be required for her marriage with the man opposite. But the impracticability of such a step constrained her. Was it not her own deceit that was responsible for the contretemps? Was she not condemned out of her own mouth? A sick shame for the interpretation her betrothed must be placing on the admission possessed her. After all her vows of defiance on their last meeting to have capitulated thus readily—how could she ever face the interview that inevitably lay before them, when dinner should be over, how defend herself against any advantage he might choose to take of her supposed surrender.

With a desperate effort she forced herself to raise her eyes to his face, as if clairvoyantly impelled at the same instant his gaze sought hers.

What she read in that moment sent a curious thrill of realisation through her, there was no mistaking the betraying signal, he loved her with the passion and intensity that such men bring to their first romance, here was the secret of his altered looks, the new constraint and self-consciousness in his demeanour.

But before she had time to grasp the full significance of her discovery the silence was divided by a sudden clamour. A harsh imperative sound, distant yet seeming as if it had its origin within the four walls of the room, resounded through and through the night, intermittent yet with continuous echoes that dinned upon the ears, the loud discordant clanging of a bell, the alarm bell at the castle telling of the escape of a prisoner.

It was a dramatic moment for all concerned. Each of the four present was differently affected by the interruption.

Mistress Carew with hand on her heart and womanly consternation; the squire empurpled and eager for justice; Rosamund, petrified, ashen of face, with a suffocating fear at her heart; Richard Pettifer calm, prepared, emergent.

He paused only for a moment, as if in

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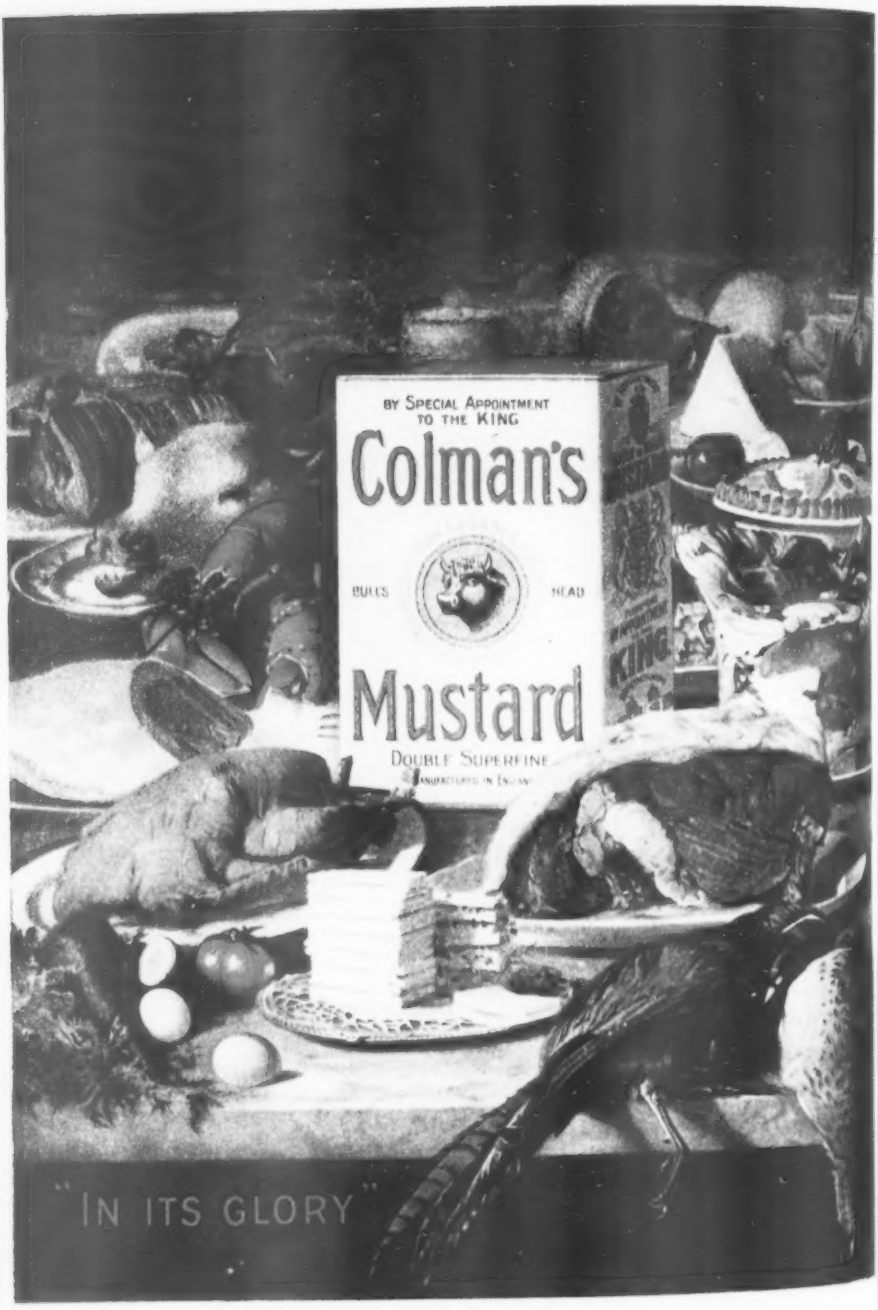


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thought, then with an abrupt movement rose from the table, pushing back his chair.

The embarrassed self-conscious lover of a moment before had vanished, the man of action, cold, resolute, implacable, was in his place.

"If you will excuse me, I will go and call up my boat's crew from the shore," he said, addressing his hostess. "We may be of some service in tracking down the runaway."

A gasp from Rosamund greeted the proposition, quickly stifled.

"Dufresne at his tricks again, I'll be bound," cried the squire. "Bolts and bars will never hold the fellow."

"Dufresne? Was it Dufresne, or another?" the girl asked herself dumbly.

Pettifer had strode from the room followed by his host.

"Poor fellow! what chance has he?" murmured Mistress Carew, turning involuntarily to the window as the two men disappeared.

"What chance — what chance?" echoed Rosamund in her heart.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRIESTS' HOLE

A MAN hunt!

That was what it amounted to in plain words, this hounding and tracking down of a defenceless fellow creature, Rosamund told herself as she reached her own room a few moments later—a sick dread possessed her, but she dare not indulge in the weakness. She, too, had a part to play in the affair, a chief part, perhaps. How often had she not rehearsed her actions in such a crisis, little dreaming that it would arrive at so unpropitious a moment. Had Richard Pettifer not been dining at the Manor that night there would have been small difficulty about the undertaking before her, but his vigilant, relentless presence multiplied the hazards of their attempt.

Somehow she must reach the Priests' Hole. It might be that it was not Armand de Montmorency for whom the dread tocsin was sounding through the night; but if it were it was imperative that she should speak with him, discuss his future movements, if possible convey to him the disguise which was to aid his further escape.

Opening the great wardrobe in the corner of her room, she drew forth a small parcel which had been secreted in its farthest recesses and which contained, beside a suit of clothing, such necessaries as matches, biscuits and a small flask of spirits. The suit was a long-discarded one of the squire's, purloined from the lumber-room where Mistress Carew hoarded up such cast-off apparel for the use of her poor. It had fitted Peter Carew in his slenderer days, so that there was a hope of it becoming her lover, in any case it was the best she could offer.

Next she crossed to her casement and threw it open, a silver moon was flooding its radiance on to the lawn beneath her, so bright and clear as to reveal the very petals of the flowers in the beds. Farther the dark silhouette of Portchester rose into the sky, with the moonlit waters of the harbour bathing its walls; a mad night to attempt an escape, she told herself, drawing back with a shudder as the bell which had ceased for a moment commenced to peal sonorously again.

Slipping a dark cloak over her filmy draperies she seized her parcel, and in another moment was making her way silently down a narrow staircase that led past the servants' quarters. As she had calculated, the whole staff had rushed out at the first sound of the alarm, so that she gained the door at the foot unobserved; this gave straight into the kitchen garden, where there were sure to be no prying eyes at that late hour.

The tall hollyhocks made a cover for her progress as she fled between them. Beyond the garden was a shrubbery, and beyond that the unreclaimed hill-side, rough and covered with a tangle of wild hawthorn and spruces and dwarf oaks. At a point in the trees she paused, searching between the interlacing greenery for a sight of the sundial on the Manor lawn that would give her the clue to the direction she was to follow. From that angle the path branched off to the secret hiding-place, and as she glanced round again there it was, a narrow track scarcely perceptible among the surrounding undergrowth. In the days of Catholic persecution a former squire of Wymerling with Romish sympathies had done quite a traffic in the smuggling of priests from France, who, being put ashore by night at the northern extremity of the harbour, found temporary refuge in the little cave on the hill-side, known ever since as the Priests' Hole.

Towards it his venturesome young descendant was now making her way. Lent

almost double with the tangled vegetation meeting over her head and the thorns and the briars catching her cloak, she scrambled upwards.

Once she paused, holding her breath; the snapping of a twig behind her seemed to her excited fancy like the footstep of someone on her track, but the sound was not repeated and she continued impulsively.

She must be nearing the entrance now; a screen of roots and branches mingled with loose earth blocked her passage. She halted, a voice—she distinctly heard a voice—whispering her name.

"Rosamund."

"Yes, I am here," she murmured.

The barrier before her was pushed aside quickly, and a pair of chilly eager hands seized hers.

"Rosamund!"

"Armand!"

Even in the blackness of the cavernous opening before her she could catch a gleam of his yellow robe.

"I thought you would never come." His teeth were chattering. "I have been here since dark—such a hole, it is worse than my cell there, and rats," he shuddered.

"But why—why did you choose to-night?" said the girl. "Did you not know that the moon was full?"

"The moon!"

He muttered something uncomplimentary.

"I cannot wait for ever on the moon, I was desperate."

"And Captain Pettifer, he is here, he was dining with us; he and his men are searching," Rosamund continued.

Armand ground his teeth.

"Pettifer! Why did you not warn me?"

The girl was silent; what answer could she make, what excuse offer for her guilty secretiveness in the matter of her engagement?

"I shall be frozen by morning," the fretful voice went on.

Rosamund gave a little cry.

"I have brought you a flask and some clothes," she answered eagerly, preparing to undo her parcel.

But a warning "Hist" from the other made her pause; Armand had seized her arm, dragging her down beside him on the cold damp earth. In breathless silence they listened; yes, there were unmistakable sounds of footsteps approaching their retreat, of someone breaking a way impatiently through the overhanging branches that impeded the ascent. Louder and louder grew the sounds, while the pair within crouched together, a sick fear numbing their hearts; at last a glimmer of light among the trees, and the next instant the beams of a lantern were flashed full upon them.

Dazzled by the sudden illumination, they started up from their concealment, coming face to face with the intruder as they did so.

It was Richard Pettifer.

"Egad, Mr. Broken Parole and Miss Rosamund," he cried. "The babes in the wood!"

Something in his tone and the low laugh that followed the words stung Rosamund like a flail.

"Spy that you are," she cried, "you must have followed me."

Again the low mocking laugh from which all humanity seemed to have departed.

"I confess I followed something that I saw moving among the trees," he admitted. "But I can assure you I had no notion that I was tracking the daughter of my honoured host and hostess."

The very acme of contempt was in the words and the insinuation they conveyed, and again Rosamund felt her spirit quiver as beneath a flail. But before she could control herself to reply, Pettifer had turned to her companion.

"You, sir, I arrest in the King's name," then again addressing himself to the petrified girl: "Will it please you to remain here until I have given your—your"—the hesitation was deliberate—"your companion into the custody of my men and am at liberty to return and conduct you to the house, or would you prefer your re-entry to be as clandestine as was your exit?" If possible his tone was more scathing than before.

There was an instant's pause.

"Your escort is the last thing I desire now or at any time," flashed Rosamund at last in a low, passionate voice.

For answer he put his fingers to his lips emitting a shrill call. It was echoed immediately from below, then drawing a pistol from his belt he signed peremptorily to Armand to go before him, and without another word or glance at the girl prepared to follow his captive.

As the darkness of the plantation swallowed up their two figures she sank down

again on the damp earth, covering her face with her hands; despair possessed her soul, the impotent conviction of failure—she had read the reproach of it only too plainly in her lover's face at parting. Instead of the championship, the encouragement she had looked for, his expression was eloquent of condemnation, he regarded her as the instrument of his undoing—that was plain; and she had already sacrificed so much for him, and might have to sacrifice how much more.

It was not likely that her betrothed would spare her, the whole story of her conspiracy would be revealed to her parents, and she knew what that would mean and the unappeasable wrath of her father that would be aroused by her conduct.

She had reached her own room again in safety and was striving to smooth out the creases in her disordered apparel, when her mother's voice calling her sent a quick thrill of apprehension through her heart.

"Rosamund! Rosamund!"

"Yes, I am coming."

She ran lightly down the stairs.

"Where have you been, child? I searched for you everywhere," cried Mistress Carew suspiciously.

"And I have been searching for someone else," replied the girl with sudden audacity.

"For Richard, I suppose"—her mother's tone was slightly mollified. "But what would he think of a woman running after him in that dress? I am thankful your father didn't see you, he has taken all the male servants and is beating the hill for the runaway."

At that very moment the squire himself appeared.

"Not a sign of the fellow anywhere," he exclaimed irascibly, passing his handkerchief over his heated brow. "He has probably gone Wickhamwards and is lurking in the forest. Ah, here is the captain," he broke off as Richard Pettifer entered quietly behind him. "A disappointing search, eh?"—to his guest.

A dry smile hovered round the other's mouth. He appeared calm and unperturbed as when he left the house, his boat cloak thrown back over one shoulder revealed the glittering blue and gold of his uniform.

"For the principal actor certainly," he conceded, "but for the rest of us, no."

"What do you mean?" spluttered the squire.

"I mean that the fellow is safe in the custody of my men," returned Pettifer calmly.

"You found him—you—but where, how?" exploded the squire.

There was a pause, dramatic in its intensity. Rosamund, standing at the foot of the stairs, realised that it was deliberately intended and put out her hand to clutch the oaken balustrade for support, her face was ashen pale but her head was held high.

"In the plantation above the lawn," came the answer at last. "He was skulking among the bushes."

The girl drew a long breath. So he did not mean to betray her, at least for the present; what the conditions of her escape were remained to be seen.

"But who is he—is it Dufresne?" cried Mistress Carew eagerly.

A little unpleasant laugh broke from Pettifer's lips at the question.

"No, a fellow of a very different kidney," he remarked. "Dufresne one can respect, but this—this——" He broke off with a shrug, his eyes travelling deliberately to the face of the girl standing pale and rigid at the foot of the stairs; she read the scorn, the contempt, implied in the interrupted sentence. But though she longed to flame out in defence of her lover she was tongue-tied, unable to say a word.

"I shall recommend to the captain of Portchester that he should transfer this—this runaway to my charge on the *Vigilant*," Pettifer continued in the same contemptuous tones, "where he will not find it so easy to escape."

A gleam of malice crossed the eyes now that were still dwelling on the girl's face, and involuntarily there flashed into her mind the memory of those eyes as she had seen them a few hours before instinct with love and devotion. How deeply she must have erred to have thus fallen from her high place in his regard. The next instant she had smothered the realisation. What mattered it to her the opinion of one for whom her only sensation was that of hatred?

This defiant mood remained uppermost with Rosamund during the days that followed. It sustained her even in the prospect of her parents' anger when Richard Pettifer should make known his changed intentions in regard to their marriage. For that he would desire now to carry out the

betrothal seemed incredible, only the manner and motive of the severance remained to be seen. And in this she was at his mercy. Circumstances forbade her from taking the initiative, for her lover's sake she dare not risk the exposure of her share in his attempted escape.

Already Pettifer had made good his threat in regard to Armand's removal from Portchester, and the young Frenchman was now safely ensconced in his floating prison in the harbour; was it likely he would be less consistent in his treatment of Rosamund's offence? Yet day after day passed and he neither came nor sent word to the Manor.

The squire and his wife were beginning to show signs of uneasiness. It was one thing for a man to be zealous for his profession, but there were other claims as well. Owing to the unfortunate contretemps of the previous evening he had not yet had an opportunity of intimate conversation with his betrothed; or of presenting the pledge of their engagement was Rosamund's unspoken commentary on the situation. Well, the ring he was to have brought with him that night would never now be required—green was of a truth forsaken in her case.

But she had reckoned too soon.

A few days later, as she was seated at her embroidery frame in the morning-room, having refused to accompany her mother on her customary drive, Pettifer was announced.

She rose slowly at his entrance, a deep flush suffusing her face.

"My mother is out."

He bowed, smiling.

"My visit is to you. I trust you felt no ill effects from your outing the other night," gazing at her with amused solicitude as he spoke.

Her face paled.

"None, I thank you," she returned in a little frigid tone.

"Ah, I am glad."

He had crossed over to the mantelpiece as he spoke, rejecting the chair she proffered, while Rosamund resumed her place on the sofa.

"The anxiety for the fate of your—your protégé must have been excessive," he went on in the same half-amused, half-satiric tone. "By the way, may I inquire what he is to you, this Frenchman?"

Despite his effort to sustain the bantering tone a deeper note had crept into his voice at the question.

Rosamund's spirit responded to it.

"You may ask," she returned very low, "in vain."

He bit his lip.

A silence fell on the room.

Pettifer had deserted his place on the hearth and was pacing to and fro, his hands clasped tightly behind him.

"It is unthinkable, incredible that an Englishwoman should so soil her hands," he began at last in a low voice as if speaking his thoughts aloud, "play the traitor to her country for the sake of a worthless alien, with whom she has scraped an acquaintance in his prison——"

But his monologue got no farther.

Rosamund had started to her feet, eyes ablaze, breast heaving.

"I—I didn't scrape acquaintance with him, and he—he is not a worthless alien," she stormed. "I have known him for three years, and he is the person I care most for in the world," she broke off.

Pettifer had ceased his perambulations at her first words and was standing in a transfixed attitude surveying her. His face had gone rather pale, but as her tirade concluded he gave a short triumphant laugh.

"Excellent, the very information I desired, and voluntarily contributed too. I have not asked in vain, you see, after all," and he laughed again.

Rosamund stamped.

"It was no gentleman's trick to taunt me into betrayal of my secret."

"All is fair in love and war," he replied dryly. "If in a duel of wits your adversary prove superior——" He broke off with a shrug.

"For once it may be," cried the yet more infuriated girl, "but in the long run you shall see."

"In the long run, yes," he answered, "and that reminds me. I was prevented from fulfilling a pleasant duty the other night, but hasten now to make good the omission."

He was fumbling in the breast pocket of his coat as he spoke, and at last produced a small leather case which he opened, revealing to Rosamund's eyes a half-circlet of emeralds, of a purity and magnificence exceeding, she thought, anything she had ever beheld.

"Shall we see how it fits?" he added with

a movement to possess himself of her hand.

But the girl shrank back.

"You—you can't surely mean to keep me to it after what happened the other night."

"On the contrary," he returned.

"You—you would marry a woman—disloyal—treacherous to her country—risk——" She broke off.

"There will be no risk," he replied calmly. "The future Lady Bracefield will have neither opportunity nor desire to so offend."

It was the first allusion he had made to the rank and worldly advantages with which he had power to endow her, and coming at this crisis the reference possessed an additional sting.

"After what I have confessed to you about my—my feelings for another then?" she continued passionately.

He averted his head at her words, but not before she had noted the sudden pallor that overspread his face.

"Did I not pledge you my word? That was enough," he said at last, and his tone was curiously weary, almost lifeless.

The rumble of wheels at this moment interrupted their colloquy and the family chaise drew up at the door. An instant later Mistress Carew hastened into the room. She made no feint of concealing her gratification at sight of her visitor.

"The squire was about to write and inquire the cause of your desertion," she twitted him lightly.

"Duty, madam," he returned. "But I stole a few moments to-day to bring Mistress Rosamund the pledge of our betrothal," displaying the flashing green circlet in its case.

"La! Captain, how beautiful!" cried the delighted matron, starting back as if dazzled by the brilliance of the gems; then, in a crestfallen tone, "But why emeralds? They bring bad fortune, I am told."

Rosamund caught her breath; here was a tempting opportunity for her betrothed to betray her. But she had misjudged him.

"They are my favourite stone," he replied, "and Mistress Rosamund kindly conceded her choice to me. There is a necklace of still riper gems that will belong to my wife on her marriage, unequalled, I believe, in the kingdom; the ring is the best match I could procure. As for the superstition," he laughed, "I defy all such on principle."

Something in the sound of the laugh sent a shudder of realisation through Rosamund's heart, yet she submitted the next moment to have the ring slipped on to her finger.

Circumstances were conspiring to strengthen her faith in her betrothed's chivalrous intentions, however her detestation of him might have increased.

CHAPTER V

THE BALL

THE result of the interview was to make Rosamund more resolutely set than ever on effecting the release of her lover from the prison ship. It was not alone Richard Pettifer's taunt concerning his victory in the duel of wits between them that inspired her, but a sense of growing responsibility in regard to Armand's fate. Day and night the thought of what he was enduring haunted her, exaggerated no doubt far beyond his actual sufferings. Her centre of interest had shifted from the grim interior of Portchester to the grimmer, darker conditions of the *Vigilant's* hold; at last, in desperation, she bethought her of one who could give her certainty for her doubts, Mrs. Brothers, whose right of entry to those floating penitentiaries endowed her with the authority of an eye-witness.

The idea of actually confiding in her protégée had not taken definite shape in the girl's mind, when under a pretext of a day's needlework she sent for her to the Manor. But something in the woman's gentle sympathy and understanding as she responded to her questions tempted Rosamund, and almost before she knew she had confided to her the whole tragic story of her lover and his late unsuccessful attempt to escape.

As it happened, the fruit vendor had already had transactions with the latest addition to the *Vigilant's* captives, and was able to describe to the girl his looks and the very words that passed between them.

"Oh, I am glad you have told me," she cried impulsively at the end of her narration. "It gives me a chance of doing something in return for all your kindness."

Rosamund drew back, flushing a little.

"What do you mean? I have done nothing."

The other glanced round furtively before replying.

"If you will trust me with a letter," she said, lowering her voice, "I will do my best to convey it to him."

"But how? You are searched always, you told me," cried the girl aghast.

Mrs. Brothers paused in some confusion.

"They have been less careful of late," she explained. "The new quartermaster of the *Vigilant* is a friend of my brother-in-law, Thomas Nines, the wherryman with whom I live; he—he is very considerate."

There was no mistaking the significant flush that accompanied the words: so already the murdered victim of the impress had found a successor in the widow's heart—were all human affections as fleeting, as capable of being transferred? Rosamund asked herself bitterly, then stifled the consideration. She should be rejoicing rather in the opportunity the budding romance offered for furthering her plans.

The following evening Mrs. Brothers called again at the Manor with the completed needlework, under cover of which she passed into Rosamund's hand a tiny spill of paper, dirty and discoloured; it was Armand's answer to the communication the girl had entrusted to her the previous day, and contained three words only, "File and saw."

The practical, business-like significance of the message had a rather disillusioning effect upon its recipient, until she brought her common sense to bear and remembered the urgency of the situation.

"Escape" came naturally before sentiment in such a crisis as her lover was placed, and equally business-like and practical must be her response to his demand. Now that she had embarked on the undertaking there was no hesitancy in her mind as to its legitimacy or fear of consequences.

Even the sight of the flashing green circlet on her finger did not deter her—her one scruple was for the danger in which the undertaking would involve the innocent third party to the transaction. But Mrs. Brothers refused to hear a word of such doubts, she was prepared to take every risk in carrying out their purpose, and so fanatical was her zeal that Rosamund began at last to suspect that it was not alone a motive of gratitude that inspired her, but a desire for retaliation on Richard Pettifer, the man to whom, rightly or wrongly, she traced her misfortunes.

The latest article of contraband that had been smuggled into the prisoner's keeping was a pistol Rosamund had purchased at his request from a second-hand dealer's in Portsmouth, and a few charges of ammunition. Even now no thought of the consequences assailed her. The plan of liberation in theory worked out with such simple exactitude.

Following the example of the three captives, whose sensational escape a few weeks previously had been the talk of the town, the prisoner was to cut a hole in the port, drop thence into the sea and swim to the Gosport side of the harbour, where Thomas Nines the wherryman, who had been drawn into the conspiracy, would be ready with his boat and a disguise to convey him to the Isle of Wight. Thereafter he would have to depend on his own initiative to reach France, and thereafter, too, Rosamund told herself with a sigh of thankfulness, she would be freed from the ever-present burden of responsibility and self-incrimination that had weighed upon her since his first recapture.

About this time the news of a projected visit of the Duke of York, Commander-in-Chief of the Forces, to Portsmouth caused a flutter of excitement in the garrison. The Prince was to inspect the foreign troops cantoned in the neighbourhood, and during his two days' stay would be the guest of the Governor.

Among other festivities in his honour a ball at Government House had been planned, to which the household at Wymerling were bidden.

Mistress Carew hailed the event with jubilation, regarding it as a God-sent opportunity for her daughter's début as the future Lady Bracefield. Since the presentment of the betrothal ring she had lost no time in making the engagement known, and the girl had had her first taste of the increased social importance that would accrue to her prospective rank. Congratulations poured in from every side. She found herself the wonder and envy of her contemporaries.

By what wiles and artifices had she captivated the reserved silent sailor with his notorious disregard for feminine attractions?

Rosamund smiled to herself at times as she supplied the answer—persistent rudeness

and defiance had worked the miracle if indeed his affections were truly won, but about this point she was strangely mystified. There was nothing in Pettifer's manner to give her a clue to his feelings; scrupulously polite and conventional, their conversations might have been overheard by the whole household, and gradually as the days passed the girl's sense of unreality deepened. What was she after all but an understudy rehearsing for a part she would never fill?

The pending Royal visit had created a furore of another description among the thousands of Gallic captives at Portchester and in the prison ships.

From Mrs. Brothers Rosamund heard of the ebullitions of ironic frenzy with which the prospect of the Duke's arrival was greeted. Ribald jests and songs at his expense and especially for his late failure before Dunkirk were rife.

"Le duc de Yorck avait promis
Que Dunkerque lui serait soumis,
Mais il a mal conté
Grace à nos canoniers," etc.

Chief among the scoffers would be her lover, the girl knew, while she who professed loyalty to him was enjoying her share of the festivities ordained in honour of his country's enemy. It was truly a complicated web of circumstances in which she was involved.

To add a final touch to her perplexities, on the very day of the ball she received secret intimation from Mary Brothers that that night had been selected by Armand for his contemplated attempt to escape—the function at Government House would attract the majority of the naval and military officers in the garrison, he reckoned, leaving the coast clear for his venture.

But for Rosamund all enjoyment at the prospect of the entertainment had vanished with the news, a sick apprehension pervaded her whole being, plainly visible on her face as she entered the brilliant ballroom in the wake of her father and mother that evening.

They were joined immediately on their entry by Richard Pettifer, who detached himself from a group of which he was the centre at sight of them. It was several days since the Manor party had seen him—old friends of his family were staying at Government House for the festivities, and to judge by his gay and smiling air to-night his preoccupation with them had proved the reverse of tedious.

A look of compunction stole into his eyes as they lighted on his betrothed's pale, anxious face, etherealised into greater beauty by her inward emotions, but he offered no comment, and Rosamund was grateful for the omission.

She was thankful, too, for the light superficial conversation he maintained as they made a tour of the rooms, passing between the brilliant groups of uniformed men and women all aflutter with lace and jewels and waving fans. It was only to keep up appearances, she knew, and because he realised how strangely tongue-tied and constrained she was.

Of a truth she felt a very impostor; if he but knew her secret, the story of the treacherous attempt that was to be made that night, that her co-operation had alone rendered feasible, how different his manner would be, how he would have scorned her, spurned her from him, instead of thus commiserating with her plight.

A block in the crowd had brought them face to face with a couple advancing from the opposite direction, no less a personage than the Governor of Portsmouth, Lord Rendlesham, with a tall, beautiful woman on his arm. He accosted Pettifer in the friendliest way, while his companion's greeting was yet more intimate and personal.

"Why, Dick!" she said, but her eyes were on Rosamund as she spoke.

Pettifer hastened to present his betrothed.

"Captain Pettifer's news was a great surprise to us," said Mrs. Bellew languidly to the girl, her dark eyes searching her pale beauty as she spoke. "He had kept his betrothal a secret from all his friends."

Pettifer bit his lips, reddening a little at the admission.

"You know I am never one to talk about my affairs," he said in an annoyed tone; "besides, I was only respecting my betrothed's wishes in keeping silence."

Rosamund felt a flow of gratitude at his chivalrous interpretation. From the first she had been conscious of an instinctive antipathy towards the haughty beauty which her words intensified.

"My dear Dick, of course we knew the arrangement must be mutual," Mrs. Bellew threw back over her shoulder with a light laugh as her companion drew her on.

"Who is that?" Rosamund inquired carelessly when they were out of earshot.

An old playmate of his youth, Pettifer informed her as indifferently; her father, Lord Seagrane, lived near them in Buckingham; he had known her late husband, John Bellew, too, all his life.

"Then she is a widow," remarked the girl—it seemed strange that she had somehow been conscious of the fact from the first moment, strange, too, that it should have exercised a disturbing effect upon her.

Pettifer assented carelessly.

"I am afraid I don't dance," he said a moment later as their peregrinations brought them to the dais at the head of the room. "But just for appearance's sake I must ask you to sacrifice a little of your time."

For answer Rosamund placed her programme in his hands—if only he had known how disinclined she felt for dancing with anyone!

He seemed slightly surprised by her submissiveness, and after deliberating a moment he hastily wrote something on it and returned it to her; glancing down she saw that his initials were inscribed against two dances only, the eleventh and sixteenth.

By this time a crowd of anxious aspirants to her favours had gathered round, and with a smile Pettifer withdrew, leaving the girl to be besieged by her future partners.

It was not till much later in the evening that she saw him again. She had been dancing with a new acquaintance, Lieutenant Hyde of H.M.S. *Swiftsure*, and they were resting in a shady alcove of the ballroom when Pettifer passed with Mrs. Bellew on his arm. Her beautiful face was turned to him, and something in its expression sent a stab of unreasonable pain through the girl's heart.

"There goes the smartest officer and the best fellow in the King's Navy," murmured her companion enthusiastically, his eyes following Pettifer's stalwart figure as he spoke.

Rosamund felt the colour surge into her face at the words, but controlled herself to answer indifferently.

"I thought Captain Pettifer had a reputation for severity." Evidently her partner knew nothing of the relations between them.

"Severity!" he echoed scornfully. "Yes, if you mean resoluteness and insistence upon duty. But beneath it all is the kindest heart in the world. I have just heard another example of his goodness. It seems Dick Pettifer's men accidentally killed a civilian in the press-gang raid the other night, and ever since he has been anonymously supporting the widow and children."

A stifled exclamation from the girl at his side made him glance round.

"What is it, are you ill?" he cried at sight of her white face.

But Rosamund disclaimed the idea; she had been dancing too much, she was tired, she said.

In reality she was overcome with shame and humiliation. So Pettifer's was the unknown hand that had been stretched out to support the widow and her family in their affliction. Pettifer, the man whom she had openly accused of cruelty and injustice, against whom Mary Brothers had nourished so many bitter and revengeful thoughts. Oh, but he must be told of the misconception, that very night reparation must be made, she herself would speak to him, acknowledge her mistake. She glanced down at the card in her hand; this was the ninth dance, only one more and her opportunity would have come, that eleventh dance with her betrothed that seemed so long delayed.

Captain O'Leary, who was her next partner, found her strangely silent and preoccupied. But the gallant Irishman, having accepted his defeat in the matter of his love affair in true sportsmanlike spirit, expected no better treatment at her hands. It was only when he began to talk of Portchester and his latest experiences with the prisoners that her interest quickened.

Inevitably Armand's name was introduced.

"And indeed we were thankful to be rid of the fellow," was the captain's comment on the Frenchman's removal to the prison ship. "Even Dufresne wouldn't risk being hanged in his company." He laughed obliviously as he concluded, little dreaming how the disparaging criticism was like a knife turning in Rosamund's wounded heart.

Strange that in the one evening she should have had to listen to unconscious verdicts on the two men with whom her life was most inextricably bound up, and from such divergent critics as Lieutenant Hyde and her present partner.

At last the strains of the music ceased,



"Rosamund placed her programme in his hands."

Drawn by E. S. Hodgson.

and with a sigh manfully suppressed O'Leary offered her his arm to conduct her back to her mother.

"And who is the next?" said Mistress Carew, archly tapping her daughter's cheek with her fan.

For her, at least, the evening was yielding its full meed of triumph and gratification.

"Richard," returned the girl—"Dick" that other woman had called him. Her eyes were travelling over the quickly emptying ballroom as she spoke in search of her betrothed.

"I saw him two dances ago with an astonishingly handsome woman," her mother ran on. "One of the friends he spoke of, I suppose."

"Yes, the Hon. Mrs. Bellew," murmured the girl abstractedly. He was with her still, perhaps—that accounted for his non-appearance. Doubtless he had forgotten his tryst with her in the charm of the other's society.

Yes, there was the music of the next dance beginning; surely he would come now. A quadrille it was—the sets formed quickly. Still her eyes in vain sought the entrance through which the returning couples were streaming.

"What can have detained him?" Her mother's voice sounded sharply in her ear.

The first figure of the quadrille was nearing an end. Already curious glances were being turned towards the slight, white-clad figure on the dais. The beauty of the evening to stand neglected through a whole dance!

Every moment added to Mistress Carew's vexation.

"You are the talk of the room, girl," she whispered behind her fan.

But Rosamund seemed not to hear her. She was staring—staring towards the entrance.

At that instant an aspirant whom she had refused earlier in the evening, emboldened by her deserted condition, came forward and again pressed his claim.

"Yes, dance with him; I will explain to Richard when he comes," said Mistress Carew in a relieved aside.

But with head held high and a face wan as death the girl declined. She had passed the stage of caring for appearance. A sick ferment of anger and humiliation consumed her; he had done it on purpose, she told herself—deliberately slighted and humiliated her for the old friend of his youth. It was his revenge for all the insults she had heaped upon him.

The last bars of the music were sounding when a voice behind her made her turn quickly, coming face to face with her former partner, Lieutenant Hyde, as she did so.

"I have been searching for you everywhere among the dancers," he cried. "Captain Pettifer was recalled to his ship. He asked me to make his apologies. There was no time——"

"Recalled!"

Rosamund's blanched lips echoed the words.

"I told you something had happened," cried Mistress Carew triumphantly.

"But why—how?" the girl persisted in the same blind, stupid tone.

Before Hyde could reply a familiar voice sounded in their ears.

"Begorra, four froggies have escaped from the *Vigilant*, and the captain's giving them chase," cried Denis O'Leary.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHASE

THE white mists of early dawn enveloped the sea—a thin ribbon of coastline faintly visible through the haze denoted the Isle of Wight. From the harbour mouth to the right a darker spur of land jutted seawards—Point Gilkicker, with the roofs of Haslar clustering on it. At that hour all good citizens were abed; the inhabitants of Portsmouth slumbered peacefully regardless of the chill miracle of the dawn proceeding outside. Only in the Governor's house in the High Street the windows were a blaze of light for the ball that was still in progress, and on the ramparts beneath the semaphore tower a little group of people had gathered, their eyes straining seawards.

Gradually the pearly vapour lifted; a pink streak illumined the eastern horizon.

"There is the sunrise—the mist will soon clear now," ejaculated Denis O'Leary.

"The fellows had a good start—they must have nearly reached the Isle of Wight," fumed the squire, Peter Carew.

"I'll wager the jolly boat makes up on them" Lieutenant John Hyde laughed confidently as he spoke.

Rosamund drew her cloak more closely

about her at the words. The chill of the morning seemed to have crept into her very bones.

It was at her desire that they had come out to watch the development of the drama, leaving the warmly lighted ballroom for this desolate vigil on the shore. But her anxiety had seemed natural enough to all concerned. Was not her betrothed one of the principal actors in the affair?

"They can't offer much resistance," the squire continued cheerfully; "unarmed men."

Rosamund clutched the folds of her cloak more tightly. "Unarmed!" One at least was armed, the most desperate of the four, and by her contrivance. What if he used the weapon she had provided him with against his pursuers? A little agonised exclamation burst from her lips, making the others turn instinctively in her direction.

"There, there, child, it will be all right," said Mistress Carew, slipping her arm protectingly round the girl's shoulders. "Richard's more than a match for any half-dozen Frenchmen. You'll have him out at the Manor this afternoon making light of the adventure."

But there was no response from the girl's rigid figure.

If only the mist would clear and they could follow the course of events. But the shrouded Solent held its secret. Spithead lay veiled in mystery before them, its historic waters realisable only by an act of faith.

What was that?

A muffled sound, reverberating from out the misty pall, distant and broken, had reached their ears.

"Egad, a shot!" exclaimed the squire.

Another and another followed.

"They're showing fight——" He broke off.

With a muttered exclamation O'Leary had pushed past him just in time to catch Rosamund's inanimate figure as she swayed and fell forward into his arms.



In the stern of the wherry Armand de Montmorency crouched, one hand on the tiller, the other clutching something that was concealed among the loose folds of his prisoner's habit. He had just relinquished his place at the oars to François Retif, one of his fellow refugees. The exertion of pulling for so long had exhausted him, that and the smouldering fire of fear and hatred that burned in his breast—fear that his escape even at this eleventh hour should be frustrated, hatred of the pursuers who were on his track.

It was the wherryman's quick ears that had first distinguished the distant echo of pursuit over the silent, shrouded expanse that lay between them and the shore—the rhythmic beat of oars, the faint splash as they left the water.

The sound had been increasing in volume steadily, and now was so unmistakable as to make it only a matter of moments before the pursuers came into sight.

A distant hail!

Armand's grasp on his hidden treasure tightened.

With frenzied vigour the four oarsmen in the wherry bent to their task, the haggard faces of the fugitives reflecting their inward despair; even Thomas Nines's stolid features appeared curiously downcast.

Another hail, louder, more imperative this time, and turning his head over his shoulder Armand saw the long, pointed bow of a man-of-war's boat grow out of the mist, its eight oars cleaving the water with steady, swinging strokes.

Closer and closer. He could almost distinguish the features of the officer at the tiller now, sitting huddled in his boat cloak.

"Cease rowing or I fire!"

Clear and imperative the command rang out across the narrowing belt of sea between pursuer and pursued in a voice Armand remembered only too well.

A volley of curses from the Frenchmen was the only answer as they redoubled their exertions.

Bang! A shot whistled harmlessly over their heads.

Pettifer, for he it was, had started up in the stern of the jolly boat, his smoking pistol still in his hand, and as a few more powerful strokes brought her alongside the wherry he sprang into the bow, prepared to board the other craft.

But ere he could put his purpose into execution Armand's hand flashed out, there was a sharp report, a stifled groan, and the huddled figure of the officer fell forward across the gunwale.



In her darkened room at the Manor Rosamund lay heedless of all that was passing. One only thought possessed her mind—

would he die? Would the treacherous bullet that had been aimed at her betrothed cost him his life, or would he recover to revile her as the instigator and contriver of the assault?

They had done their best to keep the news of his serious hurt from her on her return to consciousness, but her agitation and determination to know the worst had prevailed, and Mistress Carew had at last gently broken the news of his injury.

All day bulletins had been arriving at the Manor from Haslar, the great naval hospital to which the wounded man had been conveyed early that morning, though little of a reassuring nature was reported. The bullet had entered the shoulder, inflicting serious damage. It was feared that amputation of the left arm might be necessary.

Meanwhile the would-be assassin with his fellow refugees had been removed again to Portchester, the former under close arrest pending the development of events. Should his victim's wound prove fatal, capital punishment would be his lot.

But though this dread contingency was present to Rosamund's mind, even it paled before the knowledge of the one lying sore, wounded and sick to death in his hospital bed across the shining waters of the harbour—the man who by a strange perversion of all her former vows she had to acknowledge she loved as she would never love again. The conviction had come to her the previous evening as she stood sick with suspense and jealousy in the glare of the ballroom waiting for him to appear, though in reality she had been subconsciously aware of it for long before. Pride alone had prevented her from acknowledging the truth even to herself—that miserable fetish that she had set up and worshipped, and to which she had sacrificed the most precious and sacred thing in life.

She turned restlessly on her pillow, her eyes falling on a letter that had been brought to her earlier in the morning as she did so, and that she had not troubled to open.

It bore a foreign postmark, and the fine, pointed inscription was in the hand of her cousin Aimée Talvande. Months had passed since their last correspondence, and the arrival of the letter at this crisis seemed an almost sinister coincidence to Rosamund.

With reluctant fingers she undid the seal. The fine, close writing announced Aimée's engagement to the owner of a neighbouring estate, and was concerned with eulogies of her prospective husband; but Rosamund's eyes passed on rapidly, as if clairvoyantly inspired to seek for other matter. Yes, here it was in the postscript.

"You remember Armand de Montmorency, whom you met at St. Cyr," wrote her cousin; "he is imprisoned somewhere in England. His wife came to see us the other day to solicit my father's help in effecting an exchange. She was an Austrian tavern keeper's daughter who nursed him when wounded."

"Wife—Armand's wife!"

The letter fell from the girl's nerveless fingers. This was surely the culminating blow of Fate. Armand married, and she—she risking honour, love, happiness to succour him, boasting of her feelings for him to the man whom she had defied and insulted for his sake! Here was the explanation of those three years of silence, while she had cherished his memory in the innermost shrine of her heart. How base now seemed his insinuations of constancy, all the devices whereby he had sought to make use of her, to gain the utmost in the way of help to escape, only to disappear again out of her life.

Well, it would make her final interview with Richard Pettifer yet harder—this confession of humiliation when it did come, if that were possible—if the prospect was not already bitter beyond endurance.

A fortnight, three weeks, had gone by. During that time Rosamund had not once visited her betrothed where he lay in hospital, offering first one excuse and then another, and, strange to say, her parents had made no effort to overcome her reluctance. But now that he was sufficiently recovered to get up and sit by the window of the little private ward overlooking the sparkling waters of the Solent, he had suddenly expressed a desire to see her.

With a sick heart she prepared to obey his behest. The interview before her would mean the end of all things, she knew, as far as her engagement was concerned. He had only to hear her confession to claim instant liberation. But his scorn and contumely would remain to her for remembrance of all that was left of the joy and happiness that might have been hers.

At the door of the ward Mistress Carew,

who had accompanied her so far, turned back, leaving Rosamund to knock and enter alone.

She did so timidly, but at sight of the gaunt spectre who rose up from an invalid chair in the window to greet her all thought of self vanished.

"Your arm!" she cried in an agonised voice.

His left sleeve was empty, pinned across his breast.

He smiled.

"I have my sword arm still."

But Rosamund had sunk down on a chair, sobbing passionately, her face covered with her hands.

He remained watching her for a moment in silence, a strange medley of emotions chasing themselves across his haggard face. It seemed almost as if the sight of her distress brought him a certain gratification. At last, with a sigh, he broke the silence.

"I didn't allow them to tell you," he said; "perhaps I was wrong, but I wanted to make my own explanation—for it to be clear from the first how I understood that this would alter everything. I don't often go back on my word, but circumstances have proved too strong for me in this case. I couldn't expect any woman to hold to a bargain with a maimed creature like myself. So—you are free again." He turned away abruptly as he finished, his voice strangely husky.

Rosamund's sobs had ceased. She had raised her head and was gazing at him with a mingling of joyous incredulity and inspired reproach in her eyes.

"You—you believed that would make a difference," she cried.

Then a sudden flood of shamed realisation rushed over her, and again she covered her face with her hands.

"Oh, but you don't know, you don't understand," she moaned.

"I understand what you are capable of—your quixotic generosity," he answered in a low, restrained voice. "But I am not going to put it to the test."

A wild laugh from the girl was his answer. She had started up from her chair, and was confronting him with flushed face and eyes of misery.

"Generosity," she cried. "Listen, you shall hear, then. It was I who arranged Armand de Montmorency's escape from Portchester, and again, this last time, it was I who provided him with the weapon—that —that wounded you. You have to thank me for that"—pointing to his vacant sleeve. "I—I—am to blame for it all." She broke off, her head sinking forward on her chest.

Pettifer had turned and walked over to the window while she was speaking. For a seemingly interminable time he remained standing with his back to her. At last, slowly, he faced round once more.

"How you must have loved him," was all he said, and there was neither anger nor reproach in his voice, though his face seemed to have aged in those few minutes. "Well, he may yet get off," in a lighter tone. "I will use my influence at the trial."

But a passionate ejaculation from the girl checked him.

"I never loved him. I believed I did when he was in sorrow and distress, just as I imagined that I hated you."

A grim smile flickered across his lips at her last words.

"There wasn't much make-believe about the latter conviction," he remarked dryly; "if only your affections are of the same desirable quality your lover is to be congratulated."

"But he isn't my lover," persisted Rosamund, and then broke off. Here was the moment she had dreaded arrived at last; there was no escape from the humiliating confession before her. "He was married all the time," she added in a low, shamed voice.

"The scoundrel!" cried Pettifer, his eyes agleam; then his anger evaporated. He gave a short, scornful laugh. "Oh, of course, this explains your sudden change of feeling. It would be immodest to profess affection for a married man."

The scorn in his tone was like a flail to the girl. But Rosamund felt that it was deserved.

"It is natural for you to come to that conclusion," she averred in a low, lifeless voice, "but you are wrong; I found out my mistake long before. I think it was that night at the Priests' Hole."

Again he laughed.

"You continued to take great risks on his behalf nevertheless."

"Oh, I was mad, and you had taunted me with my failure," cried the girl. "I—I wanted to show you that I had got the better of you."

"As you undoubtedly have done," he admitted bitterly, glancing instinctively at his empty sleeve as he spoke.

With a little shuddering sigh she turned away. In an instant he was beside her.

"No, that was not generous," he said in a low, compunctious voice; "the fault was all mine from the beginning. I should not have forced my unwelcome attentions upon you. It was only my absurd infatuation for you that urged me on, and the hope that some day my love would beget a like feeling in you. I actually imagined before all this happened—that—that my dream was going to be realised—that my society was not so distasteful to you as it had been——"

He broke off as Rosamund turned her face slowly towards him.

"Your dream was realised long, long ago," she said in a low, vibrant whisper. "I—I wouldn't acknowledge it even to myself—I had made a fetish of my pride."

But his arm around her checked her confession.

"Nay, love, it was your pride that first conquered me, so that I resolved to conquer it in turn."

"Well, are you not contented with your work?" she murmured against his shoulder. "You vowed I should come to you willingly, and—and I am your suppliant."

"My wife," said Richard Pettifer.

[THE END.]



No. 6.—A Present for a Man.



No. 7.—Dinner Napkin Case.

(See "Some Suggestions for Yuletide Gifts.")

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR YULETIDE GIFTS

By BLANCHE ST. CLAIR

A CHRISTMAS without presents is quite unthinkable, for at this season of the year our affections must find some outward and visible means of expression. A dainty trifle made by the hands of the donor is far more precious and acceptable than the most costly gift bought at a shop, and the woman who takes the trouble to find out and satisfy some long-felt want is sure of her present being received with appreciative gratitude. The Christmas gifts suggested and illustrated on these pages are just those everyday necessities that everyone needs, but they are expressed in new ways, and novelty is always attractive. In each case the materials used are quite inexpensive, and another agreeable feature in these busy days is that most of them can be made in a single evening.

A Novel Biscuit Box

No. 1.—The bedside biscuit-box is now an institution in most homes, and it is a pretty idea to make boxes that carry out the colour scheme of the bedroom. The biscuits are contained in a salt-jar fitted with a stoneware lid, the outer case being of cardboard covered with cretonne, chintz, or other suitable material. A strip of cardboard of the required size is converted into a cylinder by joining the edges with gummed tape. This is covered and lined. Two circles of cardboard, one for the base and the second for the lid, are also covered and lined, and the base sewn to the cylinder. The lid is attached at the centre of the back. The box is then trimmed with gimp, and a bead handle fastened to the lid. Plain linen covers, embroidered with a conventional design or a handsome monogram, are always in good taste, the amount of ornamentation depending, of course, on the time at the disposal of the maker.



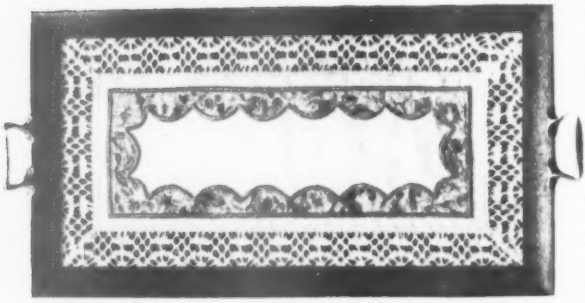
No. 1.—A Novel Biscuit Box.

An Up-to-Date Tray

2.—Glass-covered trays are becoming very popular. Old-fashioned picture frames, which can often be picked up for a few pence at a second-hand shop, can be converted into very handsome tea and coffee trays, especially when old-world needlework or modern copies of the same are used for the lining. If no old frames or the services of the home carpenter are not available, any working picture-frame dealer will make the frames out of strong oak or mahogany moulding and supply the glass and thin wooden back too. The ornamental base of the tray can be made from any suitable material, and decorated with pen-painting, poker-work, oil or water-colour painting, or one of the many forms of hand-stitchery. This is mounted on to firm cardboard and placed under the glass before the wooden back and handles are screwed on.

A Simple Waste-Paper Basket

3.—A waste-paper basket is a daily necessity, but its form and appearance vary according to the room for which it is designed. This waste-paper holder is for a drawing-room or bedroom, and illustrates the latest method of using the fashionable black and white furnishing fabrics. The foundation is very firm cardboard. This is covered with striped chintz and lined with rose-pink sateen. A border of roses cut from cretonne and appliquéd to the chintz provides a handsome finish. The base of the holder is made of a circle of cardboard

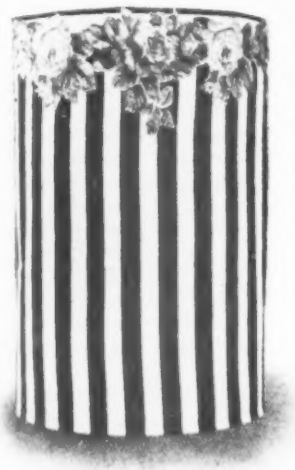


No. 2.—An Up-to-Date Tray.

covered with chintz and lined with sateen, and attached to the upper part by neat oversewing. This is just the kind of present that would please an invalid, especially if accompanied by a biscuit-box *en suite*.

Practical Edging for Towels

4.—Many persons object to lace-trimmed towels on account of the scrubbiness of the crochet or embroidery. But a hostess likes to provide dainty towels for her guest-room, and here is the solution of the problem. Take a yard and a quarter of fine huckaback, pencil scallops along both edges, and cut the material to shape, leaving a quarter of an inch to be turned over on to the wrong side. The double material is then encased with the same stitch as that used for the tray-cloth. (No. 5.) The ornamental loops between the scallops are worked at the same time, and they add much strength to the weakest part of the scallop.



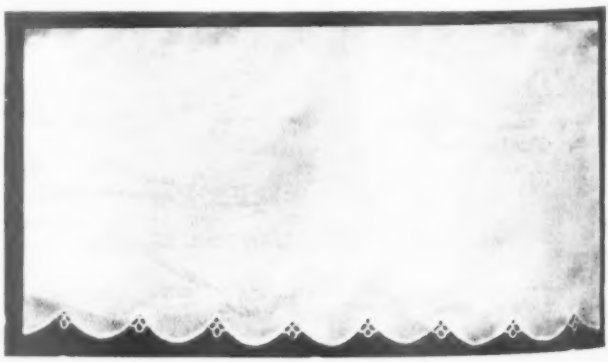
No. 3.—A Simple Waste-Paper Basket.

New Design for a Tray Cloth

5.—No woman can ever have too many tray-cloths, and considering the hundreds of designs which are already well known it would seem almost impossible to invent anything new. The seemingly impossible has, however, been achieved, for this tray-cloth is quite a novelty, and it is warranted to stand any amount of hard wear and laundering. The edge of the material is turned over once on to the wrong side, and the double thickness of linen encased in a kind of blanket stitch worked with a crochet hook. The edging is then crocheted to this in the usual way. The centre of the cloth is cut away, the raw edges turned over and encased in the same way as the border, and the initialed square stitched to the crochet. Particulars of this blanket stitch and the initial squares can be obtained by application to THE QUIVER office.

For the Man at "the Front"

6.—Here is a practical suggestion for a present to a man—a



No 4.—Practical Edging for Towel.

PLAYER'S NAVY CUT

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For Wounded British Soldiers and Sailors in Military Hospitals at Home and for the Front at Duty Free Prices. Terms on application to John Player & Sons, Nottingham.

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DAIMLER

London, Manchester, Nottingham, Newcastle, Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Cardiff, Leeds, Oxford, Leic

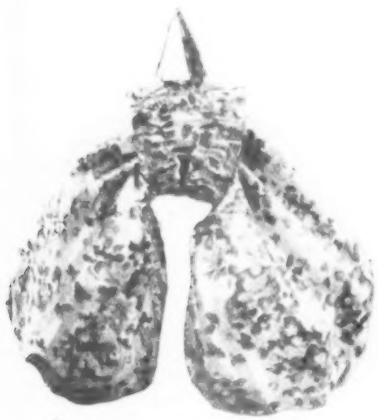
flexible back-washer made of the coarsest Turkish towelling. One half-yard of narrow roller towelling is doubled lengthways and joined with back-stitching, and the ends turned in to face. The foundation of the flexible rings is made by winding macramé cotton round a cup or other round article several times, and covering closely with crochet stitches. The rings are joined to the towelling with chains of crochet.



No. 5.—A New Design for a Tray Cloth.

Dainty Dinner-Napkin Case

7.—In most Continental homes dainty little cases for holding dinner napkins are provided for each member of the family and any guests who are staying in the house. It is quite a nice idea, for the case not only protects the napkins from dust and handling between meals, but also looks much prettier than a day-or-two-old napkin on the dining table. These cases are often very ornate and constantly given as presents. Hand-embroidered linen is best for everyday purposes, as this will stand hard wear and frequent washing; but for a gift case, or one intended for occasional use by a guest, a combination of hand-made lace, such as Cluny or fillet, in addition to hand embroidery, may be introduced.



No. 8.—Handy Knitting Bag.

Handy Knitting Bag

8.—The old-fashioned "stocking-purse" makes an excellent bag for holding knitting, crochet, etc., for while one end carries the work in progress, the other can be used as a store-room for patterns, balls of wool or cotton, and spare sets of needles or hooks. To make a capacious bag, ¾ yard of cretonne and the same quantity of sateen are required. Cut a piece of cretonne 23 in. × 27 in., join the long edges together, leaving an opening 8 in. in the centre. The lining is the same size, and joined in the same way, the edges of the central opening between being faced and oversewn together. Gather the ends of the cretonne and lining on the wrong side. The loops are made of feather-boning, covered with frilled cretonne, with a band of the same material for a handle.

Beside the Still Waters



The Morning Watch

"GIVE God thy first thoughts, so shalt thou keep His company all day, and in Him sleep." Many of us complain of being over-busy. We are worried from morning until night. One duty chases after the heels of another; the twenty-four hours are not long enough for half we would do. But is not much of this hurry and speed a fictitious thing?

Do we not have much business which is not business?—much marking of time and little progress? And is not the secret of our hurry and worry and wear and tear and large promise and small performance the lack of that other secret—"A mind at leisure from itself"?

Take time to obtain this leisure. Spend the "morning watch" with God. With open Bible and uplifted heart every day "practise the presence of God." Sacrifice the self life, and in its place He will give you His life, abundant life, life that has leisure for every duty. Make room in your lives for God.

Find leisure for Him, and He will give you leisure from yourself and for a life-work larger and fuller than you can at first conceive.—FRANCIS E. CLARK, D.D.

Watching the Standard

"THE flag was falling! Our standard-bearer was shot on the way up the hill! A soldier from the ranks saw the colours go down, and sprang out of the line to catch the flag and keep it flying. Five times that day this was done, but we kept the colours flying."

It was the story of a soldier after a terrible battle. As he told the tale, his eyes flashed with pride, and his whole face was lighted up with enthusiasm; for it is the glory of the true follower of the flag that his colours never go down.

Keeping the standard up!

All life is a fierce battle. Everywhere the one who would win the best must have before him a standard of excellence, of integrity, of right living, of high purpose. Let that standard have its rightful place in the life and all is well. It is when the standard begins to fall, when the ideal is in the slightest degree lowered, that the danger of defeat comes in.

Never once, no matter how trivial may seem to be the matter involved, permit the standard of right to be trailed in the dust. It means certain defeat, for to-day's yielding becomes to-morrow's shame.

Not only this. When the standard-bearer falls all along the line men begin to waver. It takes the heart out of the soldiers of the rank and file when they see their flag go down. Far out on every hand men who are struggling upward are watching your progress, noting whether you are holding your ideal firm and strong and true. Fail but a single time, and the danger is great that somebody else will go down too.

So live up to your best every day. The fight will be hot with you; there are no days of camping on the field of calm in our warfare of life. But you have your standard to hold up. Do it bravely! It is the price of victory.

THE distinction between the secular and spiritual view of life is this: the secular measures life by days and years; the spiritual judges it by its moral qualities, the eternal forces it embodies, and the ends it has in view.—EXCHANGE.

LETTER OR SPIRIT?

A Plea for an Unconventional Christmas

By Mrs. RAYMOND LEE

It requires considerable boldness to suggest any alteration in our traditional way of keeping Christmas. Mrs. Raymond Lee has at any rate the courage of her convictions; her article should make us think.

"WELL, for my part, I am always glad when Christmas is over." Have you never heard that remark passed by one or another of your friends? Of course, the very voicing of such a sentiment gives us an unpleasant shock. We have a tradition about Christmas—a tradition so inextricably woven among the threads of our history, that an expression of that sort appears to us at first sight as a kind of vandalism.

Yet how common such an expression is becoming! I think it is not the extra work, the endless preparations, and the added expense entailed by the Christmas festival that cause so many people to heave a sigh of relief when the holiday is over and they have settled down once again to the ordinary daily routine of their lives, but rather the fact that all their expended energy seems to have been to so little purpose, the result of their laborious thought so unsatisfying, and—let us whisper it—their enjoyment so inadequate to their efforts to enjoy.

The Glamour of the Unreal

There is no doubt that the ideal Christmas handed down to us from time immemorial must make the real ever appear tame in comparison. At the same time we are apt to forget that Christmas has been invested for us with a glamour that is only possible of existence in the imaginations of mankind. For my part, I do not believe that the festival ever has been anything in the least like the traditional Christmas our fancy fondly paints for us in such vivid colours.

Yet it is curious to note how difficult we find it to rid ourselves of these illusions. "It does not feel in the least like Christmas." We tell ourselves this every year. The remark is as inevitable as the season itself.

Let us be frank with ourselves. How much or how little does Christmas actually mean to us? We have the good wishes, the decorated house, the conventional Christmas dinner. We see the decked-out shops with their Christmas gifts broadly displayed. We send and receive our Christmas cards; we subscribe to the Christmas funds; even most of us attend the Christmas service. And yet how much of that joy of which these things are but the expression comes your way and mine?

Theory and Practice

As I have said, the theory of Christmas is beautiful. It is a lovely and gracious act to buy gifts for all your friends and to forget yourself. It is a beautiful thing to make your house gay with holly and evergreens, to send turkeys to your poor relations, to give donations to the numerous and mostly untuneful carol singers that haunt your front door. Yes, these things are beautiful, but beautiful only in so far as they are an expression of your happiness, an emblem of your love.

These things are good, but they are not essential. They may all be present; but if Christmas brings no real gladness to your heart it has failed in its mission as far as you are concerned.

We often hear it said that we are losing the spirit of Christmas. I wonder have we ever had it? Or, rather, do we not so overlay it with time-worn habits and customs that we are very much in danger of overlooking that most abstract thing we call "spirit"?

Is it not possible that some of the very customs of Christmas make it difficult for us to keep Christmas?

Christmas is a family festival—we all know that. It is right that all the members of the household should meet together as far as possible. The married sons and daughters should be there with their children; the uncles and aunts, and even

the relations-in-law, if accessible. Again I say, beautiful in theory, but in practice . . . ! Let us consider for a moment. In some families such a party is, of course, possible—it may even be completely successful—but in many cases does not such a combination suggest some hopeless incongruities? Aunt Eleanor never has got on well with Jane and her husband; father is a staunch Conservative, Uncle Andrew a Socialist; Hilda's husband is a Roman Catholic, the rest are either Wesleyans or Church people; while Elsie always declares that last year her children caught measles from their cousins Jack and May!

Ah! but it is Christmas, and at Christmas all differences are forgotten; we are to feel kindly disposed to all mankind. True; but surely we are much more likely to feel our hearts glow with the warmth of affection to our kith and kin when they are not thrown together into one hopeless conglomeration, as must needs ever accentuate their differences and eccentricities!

When arranging for other gatherings at our house we use a certain amount of discrimination. If we meditate inviting our friend with the vegetarian tendencies, we do not ask our neighbour the butcher; if the girl whose conversation chiefly consists of social and theatre gossip, we pass over the woman who is noted for her strongly pronounced views on the immorality of the stage.

Christmas—and Common Sense

At such times we exercise our good taste, or, if not that, at least our common sense. If we are to have a successful gathering—which is only another way of saying one in which all our friends are individually happy—we know that we must first select our party with great care. It is fatal to bring into such close proximity people whose views are diametrically opposed.

But at Christmas time, just because it *is* Christmas, we invite our relations, just because they are relations—though both these reasons we give for our action should be those urged against it.

Let us state it in simple terms.

Christmas is first and foremost a time for happiness and rejoicing—upon that point we are all agreed—and because of that we call together a collection of people whose opinions are often as divergent as the poles. Presumably, then, we think that makes for happiness and rejoicing. If it does so, well and good; but if not, and the second reason only is true, we have defeated the very object of Christmas—or, rather, we have no Christmas at all, seeing that the very spirit of the festival has passed from our midst.

The truth is just this: that we hold to the customs which have ceased to contain meaning for us because we are afraid that if we let them go we shall have nothing to put in their place. The reason is understandable, but the logic deplorable. We do our utmost to kill the spirit of Christmas because we are so fearful of losing it, which, as you will see, only brings us by another way round to an expression which has long since become a proverb.

A Dreaded Festival

Why should we do our utmost to make things difficult, not only for ourselves but for everyone concerned? I know, and you know, many mothers who dread this yearly festival, and prepare for it, figuratively speaking, with fasting and prayer because they know how many discordant elements they will have to face. It is estimable, of course, to make up your mind to take no notice of Uncle James' bored expression or sister Jane's insinuations. If it is unavoidable to meet these people in conclave, and you do so with graciousness and tact, with a smiling face that hides your wounded feelings, you are indeed worthy to rank with the heroes; but if you deliberately, and for no other reason than force of habit, put yourself in the line of trouble, surely you are not greatly to be pitied if you return from the fray a trifle undignified and a little ruffled in spirit!

It seems to be forgotten that though Christmas can do much that makes for kindliness of feeling, it is not going to alter in any fundamental sense your character and mine. If you are an inherent lover of the beautiful in Nature and Art, while brother John's thoughts can be best expressed in £ s. d., you may, by walking circumspectly, avoid many shoals and quicksands in your converse; but you will neither of you expect to experience

any real joy in your intercourse. If you are bored and John is plainly ill at ease, why, in the name of all that's sensible, isn't he talking stocks and shares to someone who knows a little—but not too much—more than he does, while you are comparing notes with your bosom friend on Bach's Christmas music?

I should like to go a little farther, if I dared, and apply my remarks not only to the more distant relationships, but even to those closer ones which exist between the parents and children of one family.

Let no one think I desire wantonly to destroy the homeliness which is the great charm of the Christmas festival. Where parents are wise and young enough, and children understanding enough, to make common interests one with the other—or if even without these things the family meets together for one day only out of 365—no one could imagine any more delightful way of keeping Christmas than to sit round the fire as an unbroken family.

Illusionary Harmony

I am thinking now rather of the grown-up family who see each other at least twice every day the whole year round. Those whose interests are entirely divergent, whose opinions, though differing vastly from each other, are even more different from those held by their parents. In the natural order of things they should, of course, have homes of their own—so thinks the mother a trifle sadly as she daily comes into contact with clashing wills and opposing sympathies. She cannot but recognise that harmony is impossible while so many strongly marked individualities are living in such close proximity under one small roof.

Why not let us be honest enough to admit to ourselves that in many such cases the best way of showing the Christmas spirit is not by selfishly insisting that Christmas must be religiously kept as a family festival, but rather by acting on that bigger principle which recognises that we are all part of God's great family, in which the most nearly related are those whose souls are akin?

We who are parents are jealous of our children. It grieves us ofttimes to see them finding greater happiness with strangers than among their own people. We would keep them united to us by every means that lies in our power; but let us see to it that the power we use is a legitimate one. We can never compel either affection or happiness, and if on our one great festival day we deliberately drive away the Christmas spirit from the heart of any one of our family by a selfish insistence of a gathering that is united only in outward appearance, we shall be guilty of an offence against the Christ Child Himself.

Letter or Spirit?

This year, shadowed as it is by a world-calamity, our Christmas must necessarily be a sadly incomplete one. There are vacant places that will never be filled; familiar voices that come to us now only across the long, dim path of memory; missing faces we know not whether we shall see again this side of heaven. War has come and shattered our family festival. We cannot this year "keep things normal." Then why should we not have the courage, where it is necessary, to break from convention? Why not try the experiment of giving the members of our household freedom to spend their Christmas Day in such a way as shall bring them the most happiness? And if it means that some of your family are absent from your Christmas board—well, what about inviting in their place a few wounded soldiers, a war-made widow, or a few lonely souls to whom your hospitality would bring a glow of real joy and happiness, and with whom you yourselves might find in the celebration of Christ's coming a deeper meaning than you had ever known before?

The spirit is the essential, the conventional a thing of convenience only. Have I been too daring, or is there something in my plea for an Unconventional Christmas?

(What do my readers think of Mrs. Lee's article? I shall be pleased to send a handsome volume for the best letter, of not more than 400 words, on the subject. Latest date, December 31st.)

The Home Department



CHRISTMAS ECONOMY IN THE KITCHEN

By BLANCHE ST. CLAIR

IN this year of 1915, when we are all living more or less from day to day, and planning ahead often turns out to be just so much time wasted, it is impossible to anticipate in October what will be taking place at Christmas.

One thing, however, is certain, that we who are grown-up must, if only for one day, throw aside our personal cares and sorrows and try to make the Blessed Feast as happy as circumstances permit for the children, for of all holidays, religious or secular, Christmas belongs first and foremost to the little ones.

"Christmas comes but once a year," and of all days in the year it is the Christmases of our childhood that stand out as landmarks and milestones, so that if one Christmas is allowed to pass unheeded, or, worse still, made sad by the shadow of sorrow and distress, that opportunity out of the very few vouchsafed to us will have been irrevocably lost.

Let the Children Help

Now there are more ways than one of making children happy, and not the least of these is to let them play the delightful game of being grown-up and assist in diffusing the spirit of Christmas as generously as funds will permit. Even quite young children realise that things in general are different from what they were two years ago, and the now familiar phrase "Do my bit" is thoroughly understood and appreciated by many of them. To take one instance of how this plan can be worked, let the children help buy some of the ingredients and participate in the making of the puddings, mincemeat, and other recognised Christmas dainties, in the knowledge that these are to be shared with others less fortunate than themselves. The shopping expedition will afford them great pleasure, especially if they actually pay their money over the counter in exchange for the currants, candied peel, etc., and they will be quite willing to give up the gifts they are in the habit of receiving if they are allowed to expend small sums in purchasing comforts for others.

A New Sort of Christmas

Children adore being important, and love anything that savours of novelty, and to be permitted to take an active part in the purchases and preparations will be both a novelty and convey a distinct sense of importance to the small minds and bodies. One must remember that hitherto the puddings and cakes have appeared as a matter of course, not because the children have not wished to help, but because their help has been ruthlessly refused. So instead of trying to make Christmas this year a poor copy of those which have preceded it, would it not be a good plan to make it as totally unlike former festivals as possible? Instead of the mystery and secrecy that have prevailed during the month of December, let there be full and open discussion of plans and ways and means. I can assure my readers that the plainest of plum puddings will taste most delicious if little fingers have helped stalk the sultanas and cut up the candied

peel, and happy prattle of the ultimate destinations of some of the results of their expenditure and labour will be far more exciting than speculations as to what presents they themselves are going to receive.

But I am wandering from my own particular province, which consists in suggestions for the most advantageous outlay of precious pennies and how to make the most of the means at our command.

Turkey—or Substitutes

Whether the "good cheer" always associated with the feast of Christmas can be made to include the customary roast beef or turkey remains to be seen. Christmas Day falls this year on Saturday, which entails a laying-in of provisions for three days, and some sort of joint will be required. One of the most profitable pieces of meat is a good-sized cut of round of beef, for, though a little more expensive than some other cuts, this joint is solid meat without any bone and with just as much or as little fat as is liked. The best way to cook the meat is either to braise it on a bed of vegetables, or to bake it in a casserole, for by both these methods the goodness and full flavour of the meat are retained. If it can be spared, a thick slice of meat can be cut from the joint before it is cooked, and this will provide a hot dinner for Sunday in the form of a pie, pudding, beef-roll (stuffed with forcemeat and baked), or stew. Braised or cooked *en casserole*, meat, besides being both tender and succulent, loses none of its weight in cooking, and "does up" much better than meat baked in an open tin. A 6 to 7 lb. joint, after being served once hot and once cold, can be judiciously eked out and made into several appetising and satisfying dishes at very little further cost.

Beef Fritters, etc.

A few slices dipped in batter and fried in hot fat will provide a large dish of beef fritters, or the slices and batter can be baked together in a tin for a toad-in-the-hole. With either of these dinners Kolcannon (previously cooked cabbage or sprouts with equal parts of mashed potatoes warmed in a greased frying-pan) "goes" particularly well. Rissoles of equal parts of meat and breadcrumbs, or cooked rice or macaroni cut into small pieces, do not take much meat, and less still is required in a beef-roll made on the principle of a jam roly-poly, the minced and highly seasoned meat taking the place of the jam. (Whilst on the subject of meat roly-poly I may mention that two or three slices of bacon cut into small pieces and sprinkled with parsley make a delicious filling for a rolled suet crust.) The rice served with a curry, especially if any left-overs of potatoes, carrots or other vegetables are minced with the meat, makes this seasonable dish very economical; and be sure to include plenty of boiled macaroni or spaghetti in stews and minces.

A correspondent recently wrote to me asking for some recipes for puddings and cakes which contained no eggs—as these were already scarce and expensive, and would be more so when the cold weather set in.

This was a very sensible suggestion, for I am sure many of my readers will appreciate recipes in which this costly ingredient is absent.

SOME RECIPES FOR EGGLESS CHRISTMAS FARE

Plum Pudding

Quarter lb. each of shredded suet, flour, brown sugar, mashed potatoes and grated carrots, ½ lb. stoned raisins, ¼ lb. each of currants and chopped candied peel. Spice as liked.

Mix all these ingredients together without any moisture, and put into greased basins. Cover with buttered paper and floured cloths, and steam or boil for six hours. Serve with any approved sauce.

Sago Pudding

There will be many invalids who are forbidden to eat ordinary Christmas puddings this year, but this recipe provides a delicious pudding both light and nourishing, and particularly suited to invalid diet:

One large breakfastcupful fine breadcrumbs, 6 level tablespoonfuls small sago, 4 tablespoonfuls brown sugar, 1 oz. butter, ½ teaspoonful bicarbonate of soda, 1 breakfast-cupful stoned raisins, 2 oz. mixed candied peel, ½ pint milk.

Put the sago into a basin with half the milk and leave it to soak overnight. Next morning mix all the ingredients together, turn into a greased basin, and steam for three hours.

Date Christmas Pudding

One lb. stoned and chopped dates, ½ lb. flour or breadcrumbs, ¼ lb. sugar, ¼ lb. chopped suet, and a little water.

Mix the dry ingredients together, and moisten with water. Put into a basin and steam for three hours. This is an excellent substitute for a pudding which contains more expensive ingredients and is particularly nice when eaten with hot custard sauce.

Spiced Plum Pudding

Four oz. each of flour, breadcrumbs, brown sugar, suet, stoned raisins, and currants, 1 level teaspoonful baking powder, ½ teaspoonful each of mace and nutmeg, a little milk.

Mix the ingredients together with sufficient milk to make a stiff paste. Steam for seven to eight hours in well-greased basins.

An Inexpensive Plum Pudding

One lb. breadcrumbs, 3 tablespoonfuls flour, ½ lb. chopped suet, 1 lb. stoned raisins, ½ grated nutmeg, pinch of salt, 1 oz. candied peel, milk.

Mix all the ingredients together, moistening with the milk. This pudding is so rich and light that it is hardly possible to believe that it contains no eggs, but the secret lies in the long steady cooking. It should boil or steam for at least eight hours.

Here is a recipe for a very good mincemeat. As this contains no suet it is suited to vegetarian cookery:

Put 1 lb. stoned raisins, 1 lb. well washed and dried currants, 1 lb. brown sugar, 1 lb. peeled, cored, and chopped apples, the grated rind and juice of 6 lemons, a small teaspoonful of both mace and cinnamon, ¼ lb. blanched and chopped almonds, and 4 oz. shredded candied peel, into a mixing bowl, stir well, adding ½ lb. butter which has been previously melted but not allowed to oil.

Another Mincemeat Recipe

Half lb. chopped suet, ½ lb. brown sugar, 1 lb. peeled, cored, and chopped apples, 1 lb. washed and dried currants, ½ lb. stoned raisins, the juice and grated rind of 2 lemons, 1 grated nutmeg.

Both these mincemeats will keep for some weeks if stored in air-tight jars and put in a cool, dry place.

An Eggless Christmas Cake

One lb. flour, ½ pint milk, 4 oz. dripping, 4 oz. sugar, 8 oz. currants, 2 oz. candied peel, 1 tablespoonful vinegar, a level teaspoonful bicarbonate of soda.

Rub the dripping into the flour, add the sugar, currants and shredded candied peel. Mix the bicarbonate of soda in the milk, stir in the vinegar, and moisten the dry ingredients with the liquor. Bake in a well-greased cake tin in a not too hot oven for one and half to two hours. This cake can be made richer by using 6 oz. of butter instead of the dripping and adding more fruit. It is, however, very good if made from the original recipe, and any kind of icing could be added to make it more festive.

Parkins and gingerbreads are always acceptable in cold weather, and good cakes of this description can be made without eggs.

Coco-nut Ginger-Nuts

Ten oz. flour, 6 oz. rice flour, grated rind of a lemon, ¾ oz. powdered ginger, 1 lb. treacle, 5 oz. butter, 5 oz. brown sugar, 5 oz. grated coco-nut.

Mix the flour, lemon rind, and ginger together. Heat the treacle until nearly boiling, then stir in the butter and sugar, and pour over the dry ingredients. Beat with a wooden spoon till a smooth batter, then set aside till cold. Stir in the grated or desiccated coco-nut, place in small heaps on a buttered baking sheet, and cook in a very slow oven for a half to three-quarters of an hour.

Plum Cake without Eggs

One lb. flour, ¼ lb. butter, ½ lb. brown sugar, 6 oz. currants, 6 oz. sultanas, 2 oz. candied peel, ½ pint milk, ½ teaspoonful bicarbonate of soda, a pinch of salt.

Mix all the dry ingredients together. Dissolve the soda in the milk. Beat the butter to a cream and mix with the dry ingredients. Add the milk, and bake in a moderate oven for one and a half to two hours. When well made this is an excellent cake, but its success depends on the proper and sufficient mixing of the ingredients. To vary the flavour (and considerably reduce the cost) substitute 2 tablespoonfuls of ground caraway seeds for the fruit, and increase the quantity of candied peel, using 4 oz. shredded citron peel instead of 2 oz. mixed peel.

AUNT JANE

By

JEANETTE LEE

This is one of the sweetest and most wholesome stories I have read for a long time. A nursing home is about the last place one would choose for the background of romance: the winsome personality of "Aunt Jane," however, almost makes us want to be ill for the pleasure of convalescing under her charge.

"AUNT JANE, what are you thinking about?" The young man turned his head a little on the pillow to look inquiringly toward the door.

It was the door of Room 24, leading into the men's ward. Aunt Jane had been standing there for five minutes, gazing intently before her into space. The serene face framed in the white muslin cap had a rapt, waiting look. It reminded the young man of an Italian Madonna that he had run across last summer in an old gallery corner whose face had haunted him. "Aunt Jane, what are you thinking about?" he repeated gently.

She turned slowly toward him, the placid look breaking into twinkles. "I was thinking I'd better turn Mr. Ketchell's mattress the other end up, and put a bolster under the upper end. It seems to sag."

For a moment the young man on the pillow looked a little bewildered. Then he lay back and laughed till the iron bedstead rang, and the men in the ward pricked up their ears and smiled in sympathy.

Aunt Jane smiled too, stepping leisurely toward him.

"There, there," she said as she adjusted the sheet and lowered his pillow a trifle, "I don't know that I'd laugh any more about that. 'Tisn't so very funny, to change a mattress round."

He raised a hand and wiped the laughter from either eye. "But you looked as if you were thinking of angels and cherubims and things, Aunt Jane."

She nodded placidly. "I generally do," she responded; "but that doesn't hinder knowing about mattresses and bolsters. I wouldn't laugh any more for a day or two if I were you. The bandages might get loose." She slipped a careless hand along his forehead, gathered up a cup and plate from the stand beside him, and slid plumply from the room.

His eyes followed her through the door, down the long ward as she stopped here and there for a word or a question. Once she raised her hand sternly at a bed and sniffed. The cap-strings bristled fiercely.

"He's catching it," muttered the young man from the private room. "I knew he would. You can't keep a baccy pouch in the same room with Aunt Jane."

Out in the ward the men were laughing and talking. Sanderson, robbed of his baccy pouch, was sullen and resentful, and the men were chaffing him. Aunt Jane drifted through the swing door at the end of the ward. She placed the cup and plate on a dumb waiter and crossed the hall to the women's ward. A nurse met her as she came to the door. "Mrs. Crosby is worse. Temperature a hundred and four," she said in a low voice.

Aunt Jane nodded. She went slowly down the ward. White faces on the pillows greeted her and followed her. Aunt Jane beamed on them. A nurse coming in handed her a slip of paper. She glanced at it and tucked it into her dress. It was a telephone message from Dr. Carmon, saying he was calling round.

Aunt Jane looked peacefully around. She gave one or two instructions to the ward nurse, talked a moment with one of the patients, smiled a kind of general benediction on the beds and faces and sunlit room, and went quietly out.

II

IT was a current belief that the Berkeley House of Mercy belonged to Aunt Jane; and I am not at all sure that Aunt Jane did not think so herself—at times.

The hospital had been endowed by a rich patient in gratitude for recovery from a painful disease. She had wished to reward the surgeon who had cured her; and when Dr. Carmon had refused to accept anything beyond the very generous fee he had charged for the operation, she had built the hospital, over which he was to have absolute control. There was a nominal board of directors, and other physicians might bring their patients there, but Dr. Carmon was to be in control.

The surgeon had not cared for a fortune. Dr. Carmon was not married; he had no wife and children to tie him down to a fortune. But a hospital equipped to his fingers' ends was a different matter; he had accepted it gratefully.

Dr. Carmon had not always found it easy to get on with the surgical staff of his old hospital; partly, perhaps, as Aunt Jane always maintained, because he was "too fond of having his own way," and partly because he was of the type that must break ground. There were things that Dr. Carmon saw and wanted to do, and there was always a flock of malcontents at hand to peck at them if he did them.

He accepted the Berkeley House of Mercy with a sense of relief, and with the understanding that he was to be in absolute control. And he in turn had installed Aunt Jane as matron of the hospital—not with the understanding that she was to be in absolute control, but as being, on the whole, the most sensible woman of his acquaintance.

The result had not been altogether what Dr. Carmon had foreseen. Gradually he had awakened to the fact that the hospital and everything connected with it was under the absolute control not of Dr. Frederic Carmon, but of Jane Holbrook, popularly known as Aunt Jane. Each member of the white-capped corps of nurses looked to her for directions; and the cook and the man who ran the furnace refused to take orders from anyone else. It was no unusual sight for the serene, white-framed face, with its crisp strings, to appear among the pipes and elbows of the furnace-room and leave behind it a whiff of common sense and a series of hints on the running of the hot-water boiler. Even Dr. Carmon himself never brought a patient to the House of Mercy without asking humble and solicitous permission of Aunt Jane. It was not known that she had ever refused him point-blank. But she sometimes protested, with a shrewd twinkle in her eye, "Oh, I can't have that Miss Enderby here; she's always wanting to have her own way about things." Then Dr. Carmon would laugh and bring the patient. Perhaps he gave her a hint beforehand; perhaps the fame of Aunt Jane might have reached her; perhaps it was the cool, firm fingers. Whatever the reason, it is safe to say that Miss Enderby did not once have her own way from the day that she was carried through the wide doors of the House of Mercy, a sick and querulous woman, to the day when she left it with firm, quick step, and turning back at the door to fall with a sob on Aunt Jane's neck was met with a gentle little push and a quick flash from the white-capped face. "There, there, Miss Enderby, you run along. There's nothing upsets folk like saying good-bye. Come back some day and say it when you're feeling pretty well."

A nurse coming down the corridor stopped respectfully.

"Dr. Carmon has finished his visits," she said. "He asks me to say he is in your office when you are ready."

Aunt Jane nodded absently. She went on to Room 15 and looked in at the door. The patient lay with closed eyes, a half-querulous expression on the high brows, and the corners of her lips sharply drawn. Aunt Jane crossed the floor lightly and bent to listen to the breathing from the tense lips.

The eyes opened slowly. "It's you!" said the woman.

"Comfortable?" asked Aunt Jane. She ran her hand along the querulous forehead and straightened the clothes a little. "You'll feel better pretty soon now."

"Stay with me," said the woman sharply.

Aunt Jane shook her head. "I'll be back by and by. You lie still and be good. That's the way to get well."

She drifted from the room, and the woman's eyes closed slowly. Something of the fretted look had left her face.

Aunt Jane stepped out into the wide, sunlit corridor and moved serenely on. Her tall figure and plump back had a comfortable look as she went.

She was not hurrying now. She stopped at one or two doors for a glance, gave directions to a nurse who passed with a tray, and went leisurely on to the office.

Over by the window, Dr. Carmon, his gloves in his hand, was standing with his back to the room, waiting.

Aunt Jane glanced at the back and sat down. "Did you want to see me?" she inquired pleasantly.

He wheeled about. "I have been waiting five minutes to see you," said Dr. Carmon stiffly.

"The man in No. 20 is coming along first rate," replied Aunt Jane. "I never saw a better first intention."

The doctor glared at her. His face cleared a little. "He *is* doing well."

"I want you to put Miss Wildman on the case," he added.

"She's put down to go on at eleven," responded Aunt Jane.

"Humph!" He drew out his notebook and looked at it. "I suppose you knew I'd want her?"

"I thought she'd better go on," said Aunt Jane serenely.

"And Miss Canfield needs to go off—for a good rest. I shall need her on Tuesday. There are two cases." He consulted his notes. "A Mrs. Pelton. She'll go into the ward—after a few days."

"Poor," said Aunt Jane.

"Yes. And Mr. Horace Medfield."

"He's not poor," interposed Aunt Jane. "He could give us a new wing for contagion when he gets well."

The doctor scowled a little. Perhaps it was the unconscious "us." Perhaps he was thinking that the Right Hon. Horace G. Medfield, M.P., had scant chance to give the new wing for contagion. And a sudden sense that a great deal depended on him and that he was very tired had perhaps come over the surgeon.

Aunt Jane touched the bell by her table. "You sit down, Dr. Carmon," she said quietly.

Dr. Carmon picked up his hat. "I have to go," he replied brusquely.

"You sit down," said Aunt Jane.

He seated himself with a half-smile. When Aunt Jane chose to make you like what she was doing——

The white-coated boy who came took an order for meat-broth and sandwiches, and returned with them promptly.

"You're tired out," said Aunt Jane, as she arranged the dishes on the swing leaf to the desk. "Up all night, I suppose?"

"No." The doctor nibbled at a sandwich. Then he broke off a generous piece and swallowed it, and drank a little of the hot broth.

She watched him placidly.

He was a short, dark man, with a dark moustache that managed, somehow, at once to bristle and to droop. His clothes were shabby and creased with little folds and wrinkles across the ample front, and he sat well forward in his chair to eat the sandwiches.

There was something a little grotesque about him, perhaps.

But to Aunt Jane's absent-minded gaze, it may be, there was nothing grotesque in the short, stout figure eating its sandwiches. She had seen it too many times roused to fierce struggle, holding death at arm's length and fighting, inch by inch, for a life that was slipping away. To her Dr. Carmon was not so much a man as a mighty, gripping force that did things when you needed him.

"I suppose I *was* hungry," he said.

He picked up the last crumb of sandwich, and was smiling at her.

Aunt Jane nodded. "You needed something to eat."

"And someone to tell me to eat it," he replied. And with the words he was gone.

The next minute Aunt Jane, sitting in the office, heard the warning toot of his motor as it turned the corner of the next street and was off for the day's work.

III

IT was late Monday afternoon that a card was brought to Aunt Jane—a thin, slim bit of card, with correct English lettering in plain type on it.

Aunt Jane read it and glanced up at Miss Murray, who was on door duty for the afternoon.

"He's in the front room," said the nurse. "There's a woman, too; came the same time. I put her in the back room."

"Tell Miss Crosby and Miss Canfield to be ready to go on duty in No. 5 and Suite A," said Aunt Jane.

She said the last words almost with a sniff. If Aunt Jane had had her way, there would have been no Suite A in the House of Mercy.

Suite A was a big, sunny, south-east room, with a sitting-room on one side and a bath on the other—a royal bathroom, with overhead shower and side sprays, and all the latest words in plumbing and fitting,

all the most luxurious and costly appointments of brass and marble and tile.

Aunt Jane always went by Suite A with her head a little in the air and her nose a trifle raised. And woe to the man or woman who occupied Suite A. For a week or ten days he was left severely to the care of nurses and doctors; it was only after he had experienced to the full what a desolate place a hospital may be that Aunt Jane condescended to look in and thaw the atmosphere a little.

It was perhaps her feeling for Suite A that led her to attend to ward patients and occupants of humble rooms before those of Suite A. "They'll be comfortable enough when they get to their suite," she had been known to say.

So it was the back room that she entered first, with the card in her hand.

A little woman at the side of the room got up quickly. "I came alone," she said. She fluttered a little and held out her hand nervously, as if uncertain what might happen to her in a hospital.

Aunt Jane took it in her plump one and held it a minute. "Sit down."

The woman sat down and looked at her. "John wanted to come, but I told him to stay at home," she said.

"Much better," replied Aunt Jane, nodding.

"I told him he'd better get supper for the children. So if they should miss me——" The look was wistful.

Aunt Jane regarded it comfortably.

"All the happier when you get back home." She had seated herself in a large chair, and she rocked a little.

The woman's face relaxed.

She looked about her more happily. "It seems kind of like home, don't it? I didn't think a hospital would be like this—not just like this. I don't seem to mind being here," she said.

"You won't mind it," said Aunt Jane. "You'll like it. Everybody likes it. Maybe you won't want to go away."

The woman smiled faintly. "I expect I shall be ready to go—when the time comes," she added slowly. "There's one thing I wanted to ask somebody about. It's about paying. How much it will be, you know. I asked the doctor once, when he said I'd have to come, but he didn't tell me—not really."

"Dr. Carmon doesn't think so much about his pay." There was something almost like pride in Aunt Jane's voice. "You needn't be afraid he'll overcharge for it."

"It isn't that; only maybe we *couldn't* pay," said the woman. Her forehead held little wrinkled lines and her face smiled. "And it don't seem quite right to be done if we can't pay for it."

Aunt Jane rocked a minute. Her eye travelled to the door leading to the front room. The door was ajar, and through the crack there was a glimpse of a light overcoat lying carelessly across the chair. It had a silk lining.

Aunt Jane nodded towards it. "There's a man in there——"

"Yes, I know. I saw him. He got here the same time I did—in his motor-car."

"In his motor-car! That's it! Well"—Aunt Jane smiled—"*he's* going to pay Dr. Carmon for your operation."

"Why?" The little woman gasped. "He don't have any reason to pay for *me!*"

"Well——" Aunt Jane rocked, turning it over and making it up as she went along. "Well, he's rich; he has plenty; and he won't be comfortable without." She spoke with conviction.

"But he don't know me," said the woman; "unless maybe he knows John," she added thoughtfully.

"That's it," Aunt Jane responded. "Maybe he knows John. Anyway, he's going to pay." She touched a bell.

"Well——" The woman looked down at the hands in her lap; the fingers were working in and out. "I'm sure I don't know how to thank him," she said. She looked up. Her eyes were full of tears. She brushed a quick hand across them. "I don't know how," she said softly.

"You don't need to thank him," replied Aunt Jane. "He won't expect any thanks, I guess."

A nurse stood in the doorway. Aunt Jane's head motioned to the woman. "This is Mrs. Pelton. She's going to be in Room 5. Take good care of her."

The nurse held out her hand with a smile, and the little woman got up. "I've got a bag here somewhere. That's it—yes. Thank you. I seem all kind of upset, somehow. I didn't know a hospital would be like this."

Aunt Jane watched her with a smile as she went from the room. There was a gentle look in her eyes. Then she got up, with the card in her hand, and moved



"Aunt Jane glanced slowly about the ward"—*p.* 236.

Drawn by Balliol Salmon.

towards the front room. She had become serene and austere.

A tall, thin man rose courteously. "I am Dr. Carmon's patient. I understand a room has been reserved for me." He looked up.

"There's a room—yes," admitted Aunt Jane.

The man's face waited. There was astonishment and a little amusement under its polite gaze.

Aunt Jane rang the bell.

"Won't you sit down?" She indicated a chair.

"Thank you. I prefer to keep standing—while I can." He said it smilingly.

If there was an undertone of appeal for sympathy in the words, Aunt Jane's face ignored it. She turned to the nurse who entered.

"Show Mr.——" She consulted the card in her hand with elaborate care. "Mr.—Medfield—yes, that's it. Show Mr. Medfield to Suite A."

The man bowed and took his coat on his arm. The nurse led the way; and Aunt Jane watched them from the room, holding the little card in her hand.

A little later, when she entered the name on the card in the hospital register, she added something after it in tiny hieroglyphics that made her smile as she closed the book and put it away on its shelf.

IV

HORACE MEDFIELD sat in the spacious sitting-room of Suite A, his paper spread out before him and his breakfast on the invalid table that had been wheeled up to the window. He had found the table, with its tray of coffee and eggs and toast, an easy chair drawn up beside it, and the morning paper by his plate, ready for him when he came from his comfortable bath.

He had opened the paper, but not the eggs. He read a few lines in the paper, and glanced down at the table with a little scowl and pushed it from him.

Dr. Carmon had insisted on his being at the hospital for three or four days before the operation. He wanted to watch him and control conditions, he had said. It would make his decision easier.

The millionaire sitting in the window frowned a little and drummed with his fingers on the arm of the chair.

He took up the paper and glanced at it again and threw it down.

One of the conditions had been that he should have no cigars. He had understood and agreed to it.

But this morning he was impatient with himself and annoyed with Dr. Carmon. These doctors had no end of theories—useless theories—that did more harm than good. He should be in no shape for an operation if he could not keep his nerve better than this. He really needed a cigar.

He pressed the knob of the electric cord that reached to his chair and took up the paper again.

When the nurse came in he glanced up and motioned courteously to the table.

"You may take it away, please."

She looked at the untouched food and lifted the tray without comment. At the door she paused at a word from the window.

The man had turned over his paper, and he glanced down another column as he said carelessly:

"And—ah—would you be kind enough to telephone to my house for a box of cigars? I seem to have forgotten to bring any."

The nurse waited the merest fraction of a second. "I will see if they are on your order," she said quietly, and went out.

He lifted his eyes a trifle and returned to his paper.

The nurse closed the two doors of Suite A noiselessly behind her. She went down the corridor, bearing the rejected tray.

Half-way down the corridor she encountered a plump figure.

Aunt Jane's mild glance rested on the tray. "Anything the matter with it?" she asked.

"He doesn't want it," said the nurse. "He said 'Take it away.'" Her lips smiled ever so little as she watched the round face in its cap.

The cap-strings did not exactly bristle, but there was a look of firmness in the plump chin.

"Take it back," said Aunt Jane. "Tell him it is what was ordered for him. He is to eat it—eat all of it."

She spoke back over her shoulder, half turned away. "I've got a good many things on my hands this morning. I can't be bothered with fussy folk," she said. She passed on and disappeared through the door of Room 18.

The nurse, with her tray, returned to Suite A. She opened the door softly and went in.

Two minutes later she emerged, still with her tray, and a high, clear colour in her face.

Aunt Jane, coming out of Room 18, caught a glimpse of her and stopped.

The nurse shook her head, the colour in her cheeks mounting. "He doesn't want it." Her eyes twinkled a little, in spite of the colour that flooded up.

Aunt Jane reached out her hands for the tray. She gave a little half-impatient click. "More bother than they're worth!" she said. "Always are in that room!"

She bore the tray before her like a charger, and entered Suite A without parley.

Horace Medfield looked up and saw her and rose instinctively.

Aunt Jane set the tray on the table and pushed the table gently towards him. "Sit down," she said.

He sat down in his chair by the window, looking up at her inquiringly.

"Everything's there," said Aunt Jane. She glanced over the tray. "You're to eat it all—all there is on the tray."

The man laid down his paper and smiled at her quizzically.

"But, madam, I have no appetite," he said courteously.

Aunt Jane regarded him mildly over her spectacles. "People who come here don't generally have appetites," she said; "they come here to get them."

Something crossed in the air between them, and the millionaire's eyes dropped first. He drew his chair towards the table.

A half-smile hovered on Aunt Jane's lips, and she took up the coffee pot and reached to the sugar. "How many lumps?" she asked pleasantly.

"Two, please," responded Mr. Medfield.

She placed them in the cup and poured in milk and filled the cup with coffee. "Looks like good coffee this morning," she said quietly. "You have everything you want?"

"I think so—yes." He looked at the tray with a little more interest and pecked at an egg.

Aunt Jane nodded shrewdly and kindly went out.

It was only after she had gone that Horace Medfield remembered that he had not spoken of the cigars. On the whole, he decided to wait until to-morrow for them.

V

IN Room 5 Mrs. John Pelton lay staring at the wall with quiet face. From a clock-tower came the sound of the hour striking. She counted the strokes—nine o'clock. She wished it were ten and Dr. Carmon had come. After he came and things began—she thought of the operation only as "things," even in the background of her mind—after Dr. Carmon got there it would not be so hard, she thought. It was the waiting part that was hard.

She had had a restless night. There had seemed so many hours; and she had thought of things that she ought to have done before she left home. She had forgotten to tell anyone about Tommie's milk. He always got upset so easy. She had wondered if Mrs. Colby would know. It had been good of Mrs. Colby to say she would come in and look after the children a little. But Mamie was really old enough to cook for them. And she did hope John would be all right and not worry about her. He would be at work at ten—when "things" were going on. That was good! Mrs. John Pelton knew that it was work that would carry John over the hard place—work that would take every nerve and thought for itself. He would have his hands full, enough to think about and not worry, till things were over. He would come after work hours to see how she had got through.

Then she had fallen asleep and dreamed she was slipping down a steep place—down, down, and couldn't stop; and someone had caught her arm—it was the nurse waking her gently for something. And then she had dozed a little and wakened and wondered about the children again.

And no one had brought her any breakfast—not even a cup of coffee. "Nothing to eat this morning," the nurse had said, smiling, when she had plucked up courage to ask for something. The nurse was a nice girl—a good girl, Mrs. Pelton thought—but hardly older than Mamie, it seemed.

That older woman was so good yesterday. Aunt Jane's look and cap came floating hazily to her, and she slipped a hand under her cheek and fell asleep thinking of it.

The thin face on the pillow, with the hair drawn tightly back and braided in its two small braids, had somehow a heroic

look. There were lines of suffering on the forehead, but the mouth had a touch of something like courage even in its sleep—as if it would smile when the next hard thing was over.

Aunt Jane came in silently and stood looking down at her.

The woman opened her eyes and smiled faintly. "I didn't know as you came to see us in the rooms," she said.

Aunt Jane nodded. She seated herself comfortably and looked about the room. "You've got a good day for your operation," she said. "It's a good, sunny day."

The woman's startled eyes sought her face. She had been living so alone in the hours of the night that it seemed strange to her that anyone should speak out loud of "the operation."

Her lips half opened to speak, and closed again.

Aunt Jane's glance rested on them and she smiled. "Dreading it?" she asked.

The lips moistened themselves and smiled back. "A little," said the woman.

Aunt Jane's face grew kinder and rounder and beamed on her; and the woman's eyes rested on it.

"You've never had one, have you?" said Aunt Jane.

The woman shook her head.

"I thought possibly not. People don't generally dread things that they've had—not so much as they do those they don't know anything about. You won't dread it next time." She said the words with a slow, encouraging smile.

The woman's face lighted. "I hope there won't be any next time," she replied softly.

"More than likely not. Dr. Carmon does his work pretty thoroughly." Aunt Jane made a little gesture of approval. "He does the best he knows how. You won't mind it a bit, I expect; not half so much as you mind thinking about minding it."

"Do they carry me out?" asked the woman quickly. All the troubled lines of her face relaxed as she asked the question.

It was the look Aunt Jane had been waiting for. The blessedness of talking-out was a therapeutic discovery all Aunt Jane's own.

She watched the light break in on the tense look with a little smile, and bent towards the bed.

"No, you don't have to be carried—not unless you want to."

"I'd rather walk," said the woman quickly.

"Yes, I know." Aunt Jane nodded. "I'll go with you when the time comes. We just go down the hall here a little way to the lift. The operating-room's on the top floor. It's a nice, sunny, big room. And you'll have the ether in the room next to it. There's a lounge there for you to lie on, and a nice, comfortable chair for me."

"Shall you go with me?" It was a quick word.

"Yes, I'm going up with you. I go a good many times with people that want me."

"Yes, I want you."

The small face had grown relaxed; the eyes were clear and waiting. The unbleached nightgown, with a bit of coarse edging at neck and wrists, seemed a comely garment.

Something had taken place in Room ; for which scientists have not yet found a name. At ten o'clock Dr. Carmon performed his difficult operation on the frail body of Mrs. John Pelton; but the spirit that went under the knife was the spirit of Aunt Jane.

VI

WHEN the door of the operating-room closed upon her, Aunt Jane stood a minute in the sunny room, then went her way.

In the corridor nurses were coming and going with long, light boxes or tall vases and great handfuls of fragrant blossoms. The florist's wagon had just come; the corridor was filled with light and movement and the fresh scent of flowers. Aunt Jane beamed on it all and passed on.

It was one of the pleasantest hours of the day for Aunt Jane. She knew that scrubbing and sweeping and dusting were done; every inch of the hard floors clean with carbolic and soap, every patient bathed and fed, and the beds freshly made; everything in order for the doctor's visits and inspection. Through an open door here and there, as she went, she caught a glimpse of a black-coated shoulder or arm by the side of some bed. Aunt Jane had no fear of adverse criticism on her hospital, or of complaint of her way of doing things.

She moved serenely on.

Then at a door she stopped. It was at the far end of the corridor, and through the half-curtained glass of the door she looked into a great sunny room that en-

tended across the width of the house and opened on one side to the sky and all outdoors.

It was filled with small cots and beds and cribs.

Aunt Jane stood in the doorway a minute, smiling and looking down the long room. Presently from somewhere came a piping cry:

"Aunt Jane's come!"

And then another cry, and another: "Aunt Jane has come! Aunt Jane has come!"

No one knew who had started the custom. But some child, some sunny morning, had broken out with it when Aunt Jane appeared. And the others had taken it up, as children will; and now it had become a happy part of the day's routine, as regular as the doctor's visit or the night-nurse's rounds.

"Aunt Jane has come! Aunt Jane has come!"

They broke off from picture-books or blocks to look up and call out and pass the word along. Then they chanted it together. And the new-comer in the ward, a boy lying with bandaged face and eyes half closed, turned a first curious, questioning look, to find the white-capped face smiling down at him.

Aunt Jane beamed down the ward.

A dozen hands reached out to her, and she smiled to them and nodded and scolded a little and fussed, and drew them all into a happy sense that this was home, and Aunt Jane a kind of new and glorified mother for little children. All the sick and lame ones, and the bruised ones and bandaged ones, were Aunt Jane's children. It did not seem like a hospital, as one looked down the sunny room, so much as a place where children were gathered in: pinched faces lighted up—for the first time in life, perhaps—with round, shrewd, loving smiles for Aunt Jane; delicate, bandaged faces looked out at her wistfully and happily; and laughing, rosy ones turned to her.

There were no unhappy ones there. "Children suffer and don't know," was Aunt Jane's comment.

Sometimes as she stood among them she marvelled a little at the quiet, unconscious force that ignored pain or adjusted itself to twinges. Some child, with a look almost of impatience, would shift a bandaged leg or foot to an easier position, as he listened to the story she was telling or entered into some game of her contriving.

The whole ward was interested this morning in Jimmie Sullivan's new leg. It was a frame-leg that got in the way when he walked and tripped him up. He was a little proud of it, but more annoyed, as he came hurrying down the ward to meet her.

Aunt Jane adjusted her spectacles and looked. "Well, well!" she said.

Jimmie glanced down at it, a little proud and abashed. "It can't walk," he admitted.

"Want me to carry you?" asked Aunt Jane.

"No." He slipped a proud hand into hers and stumbled happily and awkwardly along.

Aunt Jane moved towards a bed where a child lay strapped on his back, hands and feet and head held fast, only his eyes free to turn to her with a smile.

"How's Alec?" said Aunt Jane.

"All right," replied the child. "You going to tell a story?"

"Well, maybe. I don't know that I know any new stories," she said slowly. She considered it.

"Tell an old one," said the boy. "Any old story," he added, with a grim smile under the criss-cross bandages of the stiff face.

"Tell about the little red hen," piped a voice from the next bed.

"No; about billy-goat," from across the room.

"Tell about the old lady that runned away."

Aunt Jane put her hands over her ears. "I can't hear anything," she announced.

Their faces grew still and alert till she should move her hands a tiny crack and they could shout again: "Billy-goat!" "The little red hen!" "The boy that was bad!"

Jimmie Sullivan, half leaning against her, looked at them reproachfully. "She can't tell nuthin' while you make such a racket," he said.

"She likes it! She likes it! *She* don't care!" they returned.

Aunt Jane looked at them and smiled. She took down her hands.

"Let me see." She glanced from one bed to the other. "I am going to let Edna choose. She can whisper it to me." She went to a bed across the room, Jimmie Sullivan's frame-leg clanking happily beside her, and bent to the pillow.

The girl lifted a thin arm and threw it about Aunt Jane's neck to draw her ear close.

Aunt Jane listened and lifted her head and smiled. "All right," she announced.

The room was so still you could hear a pin drop. A nurse, passing the lower end of the ward with a dish in her hand, paused and looked down the quiet room. Every eye was fastened expectantly on the motherly figure moving serenely about. It crossed to the side of the room and adjusted the skylight shade, and brought a big rocker and placed it in the middle of the room under the skylight, and put a low chair for Jimmie Sullivan, and beside it another for the child that was limping slowly across. A girl in a wheeled chair propelled herself swiftly down the ward and came to a stop as close to the big rocker as she could get.

Aunt Jane glanced slowly about the ward at the expectant faces looking at her from every bed.

"Now, the rest of you stay where you are!" she said severely.

They laughed and adjusted themselves, and then they were quiet again, watching her intently.

She sat down in the big chair and rocked a little.

"Let me see." She sat smiling thoughtfully; the smile ran along the pillows—waiting.

"Once, when I was a little girl——"

The children nestled a little and sighed happily and settled down; and Aunt Jane's voice went on with the tale, and the nurse at the end of the ward passed out with her dish. The door swung-to behind her.

The great sunny room was left to happiness and to Aunt Jane, and to the children and "Once, when I was a little girl."

VII

IN Suite A Horace Medfield had eaten the last of his breakfast. It might almost be said that, sitting in the window, with the paper spread before him and the sun shining in, he had enjoyed his breakfast. It was a long time since Horace Medfield had eaten a complete breakfast served in the ordinary way. The road to the House of Mercy was strewn for him with a vast wreckage of fads and hopes and breakfast foods. There were long vegetarian streaks that excluded even milk and eggs; and gusts of Fletcherising—chewing wind hopefully and patiently; and there were wide negative deserts—forbidden fruits; no starches and sweets together, no sweets and acids, no potato and meat, no proteids and carbons. A long, weary, hopeless watching and coaxing of gastric juices, and infinite patience and cunning towards the vagaries of indigestion. He had "rolled the stomach gently," and he had lain with "a pillow under his back and head down." He had become a finical, peripatetic amphitheatre of constant, cautious experiment and investigation. And it had brought him at last to Suite A and the sunny window.

And now in a breath, it seemed, in the Berkeley House of Mercy, Aunt Jane's touch had broken the habit of years. He felt like a very small boy who has been taken up and set down gently in his chair and told to eat his breakfast and keep still.

He had thrown caution to the winds and had eaten like a hungry human being. He had drunk the delicious brown coffee, with cream and sugar in it, without a thought of diluted gastric juice, or secretions, or fads, or fermentations. He felt almost well as he ate the last of his toast and read his paper and basked in the sunny quiet. And behind it all was a sense of security and protection. No telephone could get at him; no clicking of the tape could reach his ear and set his tired brain at work.

So he had finished his breakfast and read his paper, and had been almost happy.

But now he had read the paper through three times, gleaning last scanty bits of news; he had opened the elaborate writing-desk across the room and investigated the neat assortment of pens and blotters and paper and ink, each sheet with its neatly stamped heading of the House of Mercy; and he was feeling a little bored.

He stood looking down at the desk and fingering the keys in his pocket. Then he went over and stood by the window and looked out, and turned away and paced the room once or twice, fingering absently at the keys in his pocket. He wondered whether perhaps his breakfast had not been a little heavy after all—two eggs for a man who had been dieting!

And all the time his restless fingers—whether thrust deep in the pockets of his black velvet coat, or twisting a little as he walked—were rolling imaginary cigarettes or reaching towards the swiftly-struck scratch of a match and the fragrant indrawn breath of smoke.

It had not occurred to him, when Dr.

Carmon had told him that he would probably have to undergo an operation, and that he must have him at the House of Mercy for a few days to watch the case—it had not occurred to Horace Medfield that he would be a prisoner in the House of Mercy. He foresaw that for the next three or four weeks he was not going to do what he chose, but what the person in charge of the House of Mercy thought best for him. He recalled the cap-strings and smiled.

It would not be such bad sport, matching one's wits against the cap-strings. But there was still the morning to get through with.

He wandered across and stopped again by the elaborate writing-desk and looked at it. He might write to someone. He sat down and drew a sheet of paper towards him and looked at the neatly cut inscription across the top—"The Berkeley House of Mercy." His prison cell, he thought grimly. His fingers reached out for a half-smoked cigar—and drew back and smoothed the paper thoughtfully; he took up the pen and dipped it in the ink and waited.

He would write to Julian. He had not written to Julian in his own handwriting, not since the boy was a pupil at Exeter; that was ten years ago. He was his own secretary those days.

He wrote: "My dear Julian." Then he waited. He was seeing Julian as he used to look when he was at Exeter—he had been such a fresh, clear-faced boy; he had been proud of him. And Julian's mother——

The millionaire was living over those first days of life together, and the time when Julian was born. He had not thought of it for years. All his wife's pretty ways in the house, and the garden he had made for her, and her coming to meet him when he came from the office at night; and then the days when she had seemed to fade like a flower and they had carried her out of the house; and there had been no one but Julian to come running to meet him when he came home. But the boy had hurt him, and he had sent him away. And the loneliness since—the empty house at night, and the great void spaces of life that opened on every side. He had thrown gold into them; and he had reached out for more gold—great heaped-up masses of gold and shares and thrifty investments; and the gold had mounted higher every year till it seemed to shut him off from everyone. No one came to him now except for money or about money. Even Julian hardly wrote, except to ask for a cheque or to acknowledge one. And he only knew the boy's address through his bankers—it was somewhere on the Riviera the last time. He dipped the pen again in the ink.

There was a knock at the door, and he turned. It was Miss Canfield—the nurse who had been assigned to him—with a long, light box. She held it out.

"Some flowers for you."

He reached up his hand, half-pleased. He had not expected anyone would send flowers to him.

She undid the outer wrapper and handed him the box. On the top lay a card edged in black. He put on his eyeglasses and took it up.

"Mrs. Cawein—— "

His face fell a little. She was his partner's wife—his late partner's widow, that is—she had a right to send flowers to him, of course, if she chose.

He set the box down on the desk and took up his pen. The nurse brought a large vase and placed it beside him and arranged the flowers. They were huge yellow roses, with long stems and crisp leaves—a kind of salmon-pink yellow. Horace Medfield glanced at them grudgingly. It seemed to him they were a singularly displeasing colour. He had not supposed there were any roses of that shade of yellow! He grew roses himself, and he knew something about them. He shrugged his shoulders a little as he looked toward them.

"Put them somewhere else," he said irritably.

A little clear colour flushed up in her face. "Would you like them on the table?" she asked.

"Yes, please."

She removed the vase and placed it on the table across the room and went out.

He stared at the heading on the paper. "My dear Julian." After all, what was there he could say to the boy? He could tell him he was in the hospital. But that might seem weak—as if he wanted sympathy because he was down. Horace Medfield never asked for sympathy; his heart was especially hard toward men who did. They were always the devils who were down and out that asked for sympathy, and hoped to get some of his money to waste as they had wasted their own. He would give hundreds to a man who stood up to him, when he

would not give half-a-crown to the men that whined.

He dipped the pen again and wrote rapidly—a mere note, telling the boy that he was away from home for a while, under the doctor's orders; nothing serious to worry anyone; he should be around again in a few days. He signed it grimly and hunted up the bankers' address, and directed and sealed it. That was done! He pushed the letter from him. He was tired. He wanted a cigar.

There was a quick knock at the door. Dr. Carmon had finished his operation, and made his round of visits in the hospital, and was doing Suite A.

Horace Medfield greeted him with relief. "Come in," he said. "Come in and sit down. I am sorry I cannot offer you a cigar," he added with a little humorous sigh.

The doctor sat down. "Hard work, is it?"

VIII

HE drew his chair in front of Horace Medfield, leaning forward a little, with his elbows on his knees.

"You find it hard, do you?" he asked pleasantly.

"I've known easier things," replied Horace Medfield dryly.

The doctor regarded him without comment. He reached out a hand to his pulse and took out his watch and sat with bent head a minute. Then he slipped the watch back into his pocket and stood up.

"I'd like to have you on that couch a few minutes," he said. "That's right—over there." He rolled up the window shades and moved the couch a little nearer to the window. "Now if you will relax and breathe easily——" His face had grown absorbed. He seemed not to see Horace Medfield, but something that might have been an abstraction—the essence, or spirit, of Medfield. While he gazed at this Medfield abstraction, Dr. Carmon's hands were busy. They thumped the liver and sounded the heart and pounded Horace Medfield's back with quick absorbed movements that left no depth unsounded.

"Um—m!" he said at last. And then——

"Ah!" He straightened his back and beamed down on Horace Medfield from behind the spectacles.

"All right, am I?" asked Medfield.

"You'll be all right—in three or four days," responded Dr. Carmon, with his round, successful-diagnosis smile.

"You won't have to operate?" Medfield's face had lightened.

"Oh—operate! Yes—I shall operate." The doctor spoke absent-mindedly. It was the tone of one to whom it could never occur not to operate. "I shall operate. It's fine!"

"Better than you thought?" asked Medfield doubtfully.

The doctor's absent-minded gaze broke. He smiled. "Worse than I thought—much worse. You could not live three months—as you are."

The man sat up.

Dr. Carmon surveyed him proudly. "And in three months you'll be a new man—made over—top to toe!"

"When do you operate?" asked Medfield a little dryly.

"Um—this is Tuesday, yes—about Friday, then." He got up. "There is something I want you to do meantime." He rang for the nurse and called for a roll of bandage.

When she brought it he asked her to send Aunt Jane to Suite A.

"Do you know where she is?" he asked.

"In the children's ward, I think," said Miss Canfield.

"Very well. Ask her to come. I want her to have special charge of this brace for me."

He turned back to the window. "Now if I may have you here. I want to take measurements, please."

The man stood straight as a tailor's dummy while the surgeon's hands flitted over and about him. The tall figure outlined against the window had a singular grace and charm; and the short, square one moving quickly around it, taking measurements and jotting them down, had an added absurdity from the contrast. Now Dr. Carmon was on his hands and knees on the floor, and now stretching tip-toe to pass a tape measure over the tall, thin shoulders of the aristocratic figure.

It was thus that Aunt Jane saw the two men as she opened the door. She stood for a moment looking at them. Then she closed the door and came in.

But between the opening of the door and the closing it she had seen for the first time that Dr. Carmon was a homely and grotesque and brusque little man. It

added, perhaps, a touch of severity to the expression of the round face in its cap-strings.

Dr. Carmon looked up quickly from his thumb, marking a place on the tape-measure, and glanced from one to the other.

"You know Mr. Medfield?" he said.

"I met Mr. Medfield when he came yesterday," said Aunt Jane safely.

"Yes, we have become acquainted," rejoined Horace Medfield, with a little polite gesture of his hand.

Aunt Jane's face was non-committal.

Dr. Carmon turned to it. "I want a brace made," he said, "for temporary use. Here are the measurements. Be sure to give it plenty of room here—and here." He drew a few lines and jotted down the figures and handed the paper to her.

She received it in silence.

The millionaire stood at his ease, smiling at her. He did not look like a man condemned to die in three months. His eye was keen, and there was a little line of firmness beneath the smile of his lips.

"I shall want to see my lawyer," he said. "I will go to my office in the morning. There are things to arrange."

Dr. Carmon paused abruptly. "I thought you had attended to all that before you came." His tone was a little brusque. "I told you——"

"I did not understand," said the millionaire quietly. "I did not think you knew." He looked at him.

"Well—of course—if you have to——" Dr. Carmon's gaze was reluctant and his brow puckered itself. Standing beside the millionaire and looking up at him with the puckered forehead, he may have seemed awkward and fussy and ineffectual.

"He can't go!" It was Aunt Jane's voice—prompt and decisive—and the two men turned to her.

"He can't go," she repeated calmly. "He's got to have this on." She motioned to the paper she held in her hand. "He's got to have it on and go to bed."

"But——" said Horace Medfield.

"You can't go to bed and go to an office too," replied Aunt Jane firmly.

The millionaire looked at her. His glance travelled to Dr. Carmon's face. There was the merest hint of a twinkle behind the round professional glasses, and Horace Medfield regarded it.

"Do I understand that this is *your* order?" he asked politely.

"It's better for you—not—to wait," admitted Dr. Carmon slowly.

The millionaire's glance fell. "Very well. I shall do as you say, of course." He moved a little from them and sat down.

Aunt Jane's glance followed him, and the look in it changed subtly. Something that had been in it up in the children's ward came back.

"You can have your lawyer come here," she said almost kindly. "We've got plenty of pens and paper and ink here. And you can tell him all you want to. Now I'll go to get this made for you; and you be ready to have it on when I come back."

She opened the door and went out.

The two men looked at each other like two boys—and smiled.

IX

IN Horace Medfield's room the nightlight was carefully shaded. Through the dimness one guessed rather than saw the figure lying straight on the high bed, motionless under the blanket, and the night-nurse standing beside it. The nurse bent a little toward the figure and listened. Through the half-opened window a breeze came in, swayed the curtain, and the night-light cast reaching, moving shadows across the ceiling and along the bed.

The figure on the bed stirred a little and moaned, and the nurse spoke softly. There was no response—only an inarticulate sigh, and quickened breath for a moment, and rigid silence again. The nurse touched the clothes gently, straightening them, and returned to her chair by the table. The light fell on her face, a fresh face with clear features and half-reddish hair gathered up under the white cap. She sat bending forward, her hands relaxed in her lap. The breeze from the window came in and mixed with the shadows and crept through the room toward the bed.

A thoroughly successful operation, Dr. Carmon had said. But he had been in twice since to look at the motionless figure, and the nurse sitting by the table had careful instructions to call him at any moment. The operation had been a success, but who knew what subtle forces had been attacked, perhaps overthrown, in those sharp, fierce minutes in the operating-room while the knife was at work! Dr. Carmon knew that

he could cut clean and quick and sure; he knew that he could follow a nerve almost as a dog follows a scent, without fear or flinching; but it was the something within the nerves, the unseen, unguessed something that was life itself that would undo his work and leave him helpless. He could only look at the silent figure and repeat again his careful instructions, and go away and leave it to the power that no man understands, or no man can help or hinder.

The curtains moved in the breeze, and the nurse rose now and then as the night wore on, and went to the bed and waited a minute and returned to her chair. Then some movement in the room, something unseen, drew her, and she went over to the bed. She moved the light so that it fell, half-shaded, on the pillow, and bent forward and looked. Her hand sought the wrist under the blanket and held it a minute, and she lifted her face and turned the light quickly away.

She was moving toward the door, but she stopped and looked at it—it had swung softly back into the shadowy room, and Aunt Jane was nodding to her and smiling with subdued half-gesture toward the bed.

"I'll take him now," she said in her low voice.

"Shall I call Dr. Carmon?"

"Not yet." She went on toward the bed, and the nurse passed out.

In the dimness of the room nothing had happened. The curtains still swayed a little in the breeze, the motionless figure on the bed lay rigid as before under its blanket, and the shadows crept toward it and back. But in the turning of a minute forces had ranged themselves in the quiet room.

Aunt Jane turned off the light and pushed back the curtains from the window and brought a chair to the side of the bed and sat down with the forces. She had moved with the quiet certainty of one who sees what is to be done. She knew that presently there would steal out from the shadows something that had neither name nor shape.

She slipped her hand along inside the blanket and found the lifeless one and rubbed it a little and touched the wrist with firm, quick fingers, and clasped the hand close.

Then she sat with her head bent, as motionless as the figure beside her. The moments came and went. Outside, the clock-tower boomed the hour softly, and then the half-hour; and somewhere in the distance a rooster crowed—a shrill, clear call, like light. Something ran through the figure on the bed—the man stirred a little. Half-way through the lifeless fingers something crept toward warmth, and lay chill—and went slowly back and came again—and Aunt Jane's hand closed on it, clean and soft. The man stirred and opened his eyes and stared vaguely out.

The shadows in the room were clear grey—the east light had touched them. The eyes looked out on the light, unseeing, and fell shut. A half-sigh fluttered to the parched lips and escaped, and the man turned his head. Aunt Jane bent forward, waiting. The eyes opened and saw her and closed, and an even breath came through the lips. Then a deep groan broke from them and Aunt Jane smiled. It was a quiet, brooding smile like the light of the morning that was flooding in through the room. The man groaned again.

Aunt Jane nodded happily and got up. She opened the windows wide and let in the freshness, and stood for a moment breathing it in. Then she went back to the bed.

The man's eyes regarded her dully.

"You feeling all right now?" she said, cheerfully, bending over him.

He turned his head with a groan and Aunt Jane touched the bell.

It was the nurse with the reddish hair who responded, fresh from her nap.

"How is he?" she asked. She looked toward the drawn face on the pillow.

"He's all right," said Aunt Jane. "He's just begun to suffer. He'll get along all right now."

"You don't think we need to send for Dr. Carmon?" she asked doubtingly.

"No, we don't need Dr. Carmon," replied Aunt Jane. "He did *his* work yesterday. It's our turn now. It's Mr. Medfield's turn." She nodded toward the bed and smiled and went out.

X

THROUGH the open door of Room 5 Aunt Jane heard voices and stopped to listen. Then she went in.

"This is my husband," said the little woman on the bed. "He says they're getting along quite well."

The man by the bed rose awkwardly, turning his stiff hat in his hands. He wore a high collar with sharp points turning back

in front and a bright blue necktie. A large stick-pin was thrust through the tie, and his hair was combed carefully in a wide, flat curl on his forehead. He stood with his feet close together, and bowed to Aunt Jane over the hat.

She held out her hand. "How do you do, Mr. Pelton? Your wife is getting along first-rate!" She nodded toward the bed.

The little woman's face flushed with clear colour. "The doctor says I can go in ten days!" she announced.

Aunt Jane considered it. "Well, you can go as soon as you can go—it may be ten days and it may be eleven. I wouldn't begin to say just how many days, if I were you. We mean to make you comfortable as long as you stay here." She looked at her benignly over her glasses. "You're comfortable, aren't you?"

"Oh, I'm comfortable!" said the woman. "Everybody's real good to me, John." She had turned to him. "Tommie don't miss me, does he?"

John tugged at something in his pocket. "He kind of misses you, I guess. But we're getting along *fine!* I got these for you, so's you could see." He put a fat envelope in her fingers and she received it doubtingly. She held it up and looked at it.

"I don't know where they put my spectacles. I can't see very well."

"You don't need to see—not for them. Here, I'll show you." He took the envelope proudly and drew out a stiff card and held it toward her. "There you be!"

She took it in questioning fingers.

"Why, it's Mamie!" She turned her face to Aunt Jane and held up the card to her. "That's my oldest girl—that's Mamie!" Her voice had a happy tone—with tears somewhere in it.

The man smiled broadly. "And I've got another for you." He took it from the envelope and extended it. "And here's two more!" He held the group of pictures spread like a fan in his big hand and gazed at them.

"Why, John Pelton! You don't mean you had 'em all done!"

"The whole family," he said proudly.

"John—*Pelton!* Here—let *me* see!"

She took the pictures from him, one by one, and her fingers trembled with them. "That's Tommie. He looks nice, don't he?" She held it toward Aunt Jane.

"And that's Wesley. His tie don't set quite straight." Regret and pride mingled over Wesley's tie and smiled at him fondly. "And that's Lulie! It's the whole family. Well, I *am pleased!*"

She lay back and looked at them, proud and content, and Aunt Jane praised the children.

"I've got another one here," said the man. He looked half shame-faced as he drew it out.

Aunt Jane took it and smiled, and glanced from the picture to his face.

"Yes, it's good. Looks like you," she said.

The woman raised a curious hand to it——

"Why, John!"

He stood smiling almost bashfully.

"I thought you'd better have the whole family while you were about it," he said.

She gathered her family into her eager hands. "I'd rather have them than anything in the world!" she said softly.

"They didn't cost much," he volunteered. "The kind you send on post cards, you know."

"I don't care what they cost!" said the little woman. "The doctor says I'm going to be really well, John, when I get up."

She was looking at the baby, in his knitted sacque. "But there won't be any more babies," she said half wistfully.

John blew his nose violently and looked out of the window.

"I'd better be going," he announced.

"Yes. Time for you to go," said Aunt Jane. She moved with him toward the door.

She stepped out into the corridor, and he turned to her. "Tickled most to death, wa'n't she?" he said. "I was kind o' 'fraid she'd think it was foolish."

"If more men were 'foolish' the world would get along better," said Aunt Jane cryptically. She beamed on him. "You'd better not come again for four or five days now, Mr. Pelton. She ought to keep quiet and not think about what the children are doing and what's going on. She can think about her pictures for a while," she added kindly, as his face fell. "There's times when picture-children help more than real ones—more handy for sick folk sometimes."

"I expect that's so," said the man. "I don't know as I ever saw her look so pleased—not since before we were married," he added thoughtfully.

Aunt Jane watched him march happily

down the corridor, and turned back to the room.

The woman had spread the children in a row against a little ridge of the blanket, and she was looking at them with happy eyes. She turned her gaze to Aunt Jane as she came in.

"Wa'n't that just like a man!" she said, deprecatingly.

"Just like a man," assented Aunt Jane. "One of those senseless things that come out all right!"

She sat down comfortably by the bed. "Sometimes I think men don't know any more'n big grampuses—they just go blundering along!" She looked benevolently at the row of faces on the blanket.

Half-way down the corridor Aunt Jane encountered Miss Canfield.

The nurse stopped her with a word. "Mr. Medfield keeps asking for you." She raised her chin a little as she spoke.

Aunt Jane regarded it mildly. "Anything the matter with him?" she asked.

Miss Canfield hesitated. "He's irritable," she said safely.

Aunt Jane nodded. "That's good for him. That won't hurt at all. He's got his suite, and he's got the best 'special' in the House on his case."

Miss Canfield's face softened subtly.

"You tell him I'm busy," said Aunt Jane. "I'll come by and by, when I get around to it. There's Miss Manners with the new baby! I was just looking for her!" She hurried off.

Miss Canfield watched with amused face as Aunt Jane gathered the baby into her ample arms and disappeared in Room 15. Then she turned back to report to Horace Medfield in Suite A that Aunt Jane would come when she was not so busy.

XI

"MR. MEDFIELD is asking for you again," said Miss Canfield.

Aunt Jane was just coming out of the children's ward, and she stopped and looked at the nurse and smiled. "I suppose he's fussing and stewing a good deal?" she asked.

"He is," admitted Miss Canfield.

"Well, I'll be in by and by. You can tell him I'm coming."

She went leisurely on. When she had made her rounds of the top floor and had descended to the office, and entered a few items in her day book, and given directions for linen for the day, and had a conference with the cook, she turned toward Suite A.

As she knocked on the outer door, and bent her head a little to listen, she had a sudden sense of the room the other side of the door—she saw it lying in darkness, and she heard the rooster's clear, shrill call through the window, and saw the straight form on the bed. It all came before her and vanished as she knocked.

"Come in!" said a voice. It was sharp and a little imperious.

Aunt Jane opened the door.

A burst of light and colour greeted her. The blinds were rolled to the tops of the windows, and there were flowers everywhere. Roses on the table, a great bunch of carnations on the desk, violets on the stand at the head of Horace Medfield's bed, foxgloves and snapdragons filling the window-sill and spilling over into the room. It was a riot of colour; and in the midst of it, propped on his pillows on the high white bed, the millionaire looked out with a scowl.

He wore an embroidered Chinese shoulder-coat of blue and gold, and his hair, carefully combed, stood up a little on his forehead, and the Van Dyck beard was clipped to a point.

"You look pretty as a picture," said Aunt Jane cheerfully.

The scowl deepened a little, then it broke. "Will you sit down?" said Medfield politely.

Aunt Jane drew up a chair.

He watched her descend into it and his brow cleared. "I have been wanting to see you."

Aunt Jane nodded. "I've been meaning to come. There's a good many things to do in a hospital." Her chair adjusted itself. "Was it anything in particular you wanted to ask me about?"

The millionaire's eyes had been resting on the quiet face. They turned away, a little startled. "Why—um—yes! I was thinking—*I* was thinking." His eyes fell on the roses, and he swept his hand toward them. "These flowers—all of them," he said.

Aunt Jane turned a little in her chair and beamed. "They look nice, don't they!"

"They're well enough," said Medfield, grudgingly. Then, a little petulantly,



"'There's something about violets that makes me think of home places and folk'"—*p.* 241.

Drawn by
Hallie Salmon.

"I'm tired of them. I want them taken away—all of them!"

"Sick folk get notions," said Aunt Jane placidly. "Where shall I take them to?"

"Why, take them——" He looked about impatiently. "Take them where you usually take flowers!"

"We generally take them where they're sent," returned Aunt Jane. She leaned forward to the violets and touched them with cool, gentle fingers, looking at them kindly. "There's something about violets that makes me think of home places and folk."

"Would you like them?" said Horace Medfield. He was watching the cool, firm fingers with a quiet look—almost of pleasure.

"Me? Mercy, no!" The fingers withdrew to her lap. "You couldn't *send* them to me. I'm here."

"Yes, you are here, that's so!" He almost smiled at her. His eyes returned to the fingers resting in her lap. "I have not had a chance to thank you—for your great kindness the other night."

"You are welcome," said Aunt Jane.

"It wasn't any great kindness," she added after a minute, "I always do for people that need me."

"I suppose you know——" He stopped a moment, as if he could not quite speak of the thing that was in his mind. "I think you *made* me—come back," he said slowly.

"It makes a difference whether anybody cares," admitted Aunt Jane.

"Did you care?" The sharp, pointed face was turned to her. "Did you care?"

"Yes, I cared," said Aunt Jane.

"But——" He looked at her, seemingly bewildered.

Aunt Jane regarded him and smiled. "There didn't seem to be anybody *but* me—*to* care," she said cheerfully.

"No—there wasn't."

"But I see now that there are a good many of them." She motioned to the flowers. "I don't know that I've ever seen anybody have more flowers in a week."

"Flowers don't care—the people they come from don't care!"

The tone was scornful, almost bitter.

"Don't they!" She beamed on the flowers. "Somehow I can't ever believe flowers don't mean what they look." She said it thoughtfully.

"These don't!" He looked at them with his little cynical smile. "Those roses there—they must have cost a pound at least."

"I never saw bigger ones," assented Aunt Jane.

"My partner's widow sent them. She sent them for business."

"*Did* she?" Aunt Jane looked at the roses with interest.

"Mere business!" said Medfield. "And the carnations on the desk there—are from the men in the office."

Aunt Jane smiled to him. "What would you like me to do with them for you?" she asked tranquilly.

"Do whatever you like. *I* don't care!" His indifference had returned. He was tired, and he felt suddenly weak.

She looked at him and leaned forward a little. "I'm going to take out that headrest," she said, "so that you can lie down."

She removed the frame behind the pillows and shook them a little and let them gently back. "There—now you can lie down and have a good rest; and soon now you're going to have some broth and then you'll go to sleep. It doesn't do any good to get stirred up over folks' flowers," she added quietly.

"No." There was a little smile on his lips. He looked up at her almost like a boy from his pillow. "But it did me good to tell you!"

"I reckoned it would," said Aunt Jane. "Now I'll go and get your broth for you."

She disappeared from the room and Horace Medfield's eyes closed—and opened again to find her standing beside him, the cup of broth in her hand.

She gave it to him through the crooked tube and watched the liquid lower in the cup with benignant eye.

"Just a little mite more," she said as he turned away his head. "Just a mite. There! You've done first-rate!"

She set the cup on the stand.

"Now I'm going to take all these flowers"; she gathered the carnations in her hands as she spoke. "I was thinking about it whilst I was heating your broth for you. I'm going to take them up to the children's ward. They'll be happy enough when they see them!" She held the flowers at arm's length and looked at them with pleased eyes. He watched her with a little smile and a look almost of interest.

"And I'm going to tell them that Mr. Medfield sent them——"

He raised a quick hand. "No——!"

She turned in surprise. "Don't you want me to?"

"No."

He waited a minute

"You can say a man sent them."

"Yes, I can say it—— "

Aunt Jane's face cleared. "I see how 'tis. You don't want them to know—about you."

"No." He was looking almost embarrassed.

She considered it a minute. "What's your first name?" she asked.

He cleared his throat like a boy. "Horace," he said meekly. "Horace G. Medfield."

Aunt Jane smiled. "I remember about it now. 'Horace,'" she said it softly, as if it pleased her. "Horace. That'll do! We don't need the G.—just Horace. I'll tell them Mr. Horace sent them." She smiled at him cheerfully.

"Very well."

Aunt Jane went over to the window and gathered up the foxgloves—as many as her hands could hold—and turned to the door. "I'll come back for the rest."

But the door had opened and the white-coated boy was standing, holding out three large boxes and grinning pleasantly.

Horace Medfield, from his pillow, groaned.

Aunt Jane glanced toward him with reassurance in her look. "I shall take them all. You don't need to worry. You won't be bothered. You go and get the wheel-tray, Preston, and we'll take them at once."

They filled the cart—the three great boxes underneath and the loose flowers on top covering them and trailing over the sides and ends; and Preston wheeled it out of the door.

Aunt Jane, still with her hands full of blossoms, looked back with a smile. "Now you'll rest comfortable," she said.

XII

WHEN the wheel-tray appeared in the door of the children's ward, and Aunt Jane—with her arms overflowing with the flowers—close behind it, there was silence for a breath, and then a cry:

"Look there!"

"My goodness!"

"See the flowers!"

They leaned forward with eager hands, or raised themselves on a hand or elbow, as she went down between the beds, pushing the wheel-tray before her.

She smiled and nodded and came to a full stop by the big table in the centre of the ward. She laid her armful of flowers carefully on the table and turned to the tray.

"Where did they come from? Look at the roses. My!"

They reached out hands to her. "Where'd they come from, Aunt Jane?" "Who sent them to us?" "Look at the vi'lets!"

"A man by the name of—Horace. Mr. Horace sent them!" They waited.

She lifted the cover and held out the box, and a little cry went up from the ward, half-repressed and full of awed delight. It was a happy thing to see a great trayful of blossoms come rolling in; and it was a still more beautiful thing to have the cover lifted from the box, and all that colour and fragrance leap out!

They watched with eager eyes.

Aunt Jane lifted a card from the top of the flowers and looked at it and tucked it away in the pocket of her big apron. The card had a narrow black edge.

There was laughing and chatter and a happy stir as Aunt Jane carried the boxes from bed to bed.

She watched the hands reach to the choosing—and hesitate—and the eyes fill with light, and smiles come as the children sank back contented. She had a sudden glimpse of Horace Medfield in his blue-and-gold Chinese coat waving them away.

"Seems a pity he can't see them," she thought, watching the faces. "They're all different—just as different as the flowers are!"

For some of them held the flowers in both hands, and some of them had laid them on the pillows, and some were smelling them, and some were only looking; and one blossom was caught into the iron framework of a bed where the sun fell on it and the child was looking at it with wonder-filled eyes. It was her own—her flower—that someone sent—a crimson rose with the soft dark colour clear to the heart of it where the sun went in. It nodded down to her.

She went over to the bed where the crimson rose was, and held out her arms. The child climbed into them and laughed. She was a gay little thing—not four years old. To-morrow she would be sitting up, and the next day she would go home.

Aunt Jane knew the home. The father

and mother drunk, perhaps. The child had been broken, between them, and had come to the House of Mercy for repairs. She held her in her arms and rocked a little, and thought. Something must be done to protect the child. Dr. Carmon must do something. He always did things—if he had to. Aunt Jane rocked back and forth, thinking. She must take him when he was in good humour—to-morrow morning, perhaps.

The child raised her hand to Aunt Jane's face. "You don't smile!" she said imperiously.

Then Aunt Jane looked down at her severely.

The child laughed out, and nestled close, and presently they were playing a game. It was not a new game in the ward; other children played it sometimes. But you were only allowed to play it if you had been very ill and were getting well; or perhaps if you were going home—day after to-morrow—and father and mother might be drunk and might break tables and chairs about you—and perhaps a child's arm, if it got in the way of their playfulness. The game was to catch Aunt Jane off guard and take off her spectacles and her cap—and see how she looked.

The child reached up a quick hand and laughed. Aunt Jane dodged and shook her head, and escaped the hand. And then—perhaps because Susie was going home day after to-morrow—she had caught off the spectacles, and Aunt Jane's cap lay on the floor, and the hair was escaping from its pins and coming down all about her face and shoulders—and the child was lying back against her arm, looking at her and laughing happily.

The door from the corridor swung silently in, and Dr. Carmon stood looking in the room.

The children in the beds turned merry eyes to him.

But his hand made a gesture and they held their breath, laughing as he came down the room and stood looking sternly at the figure in the big chair.

Aunt Jane's hand was groping at the tumbled hair, and she was laughing gently, watching the child's face.

Then she looked up——

"Mercy sakes!" Her hand reached down for her cap.

But Dr. Carmon had bent to the floor and picked up the cap. He was holding it and looking at her. "How old are you, Aunt Jane?" he said sternly.

Aunt Jane, out of the maze of her hair, looked up. "I am forty-five years old," she said. "Give me my cap!"

"Say 'Please,'" said Dr. Carmon gravely, holding it at arm's length.

From the beds the children looked on with shining eyes.

Aunt Jane looked at the cap—and at the child in her arms—and felt the eyes encircling her, and smiled a little.

"Please," she said meekly, and her hand reached up.

Dr. Carmon held it still at arm's length. "Say 'Please, Frederic,'" he insisted. Not even the child in the nearest bed could have guessed the words that went with the laughing gesture of the hand holding the cap.

But Aunt Jane's face flushed swiftly.

She gathered the child in her arms and carried her to her bed, and put her down gently. Then her hands caught up the tumbled hair and fastened it in place and smoothed it down, and she came placidly back to Dr. Carmon.

His face was very grave. But something in behind his eyes laughed.

He held out the cap with a low bow.

She took it and put it on her head, with dignity, and looked for her spectacles.

"They're on the table," said Dr. Carmon.

He handed them to her, and she put them on and looked at him with her serene, competent gaze. "I'll send Miss Simpson up to you—I suppose you'll want her," she said.

"Yes—*please*," said Dr. Carmon, polite and grave.

XIII

THE cards that Aunt Jane had taken from the boxes of flowers remained untouched in the pocket of her apron.

She had intended to take them to Mr. Medfield at once. But the days that followed the flowers and the children's ward had been busy ones. Serious cases had come in, and Dr. Carmon's face had been severe and a little anxious. No one would have guessed from its puckered gaze as he looked at Aunt Jane and gave minute directions for the case in Room 18, that he had ever seen the correct muslin cap except as it looked now, framing a serene face.

He gazed at it absently and fussed at his pocket and took out his notes and consulted them. "I am to be sent for, you

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Method.—Stone the raisins; wash, pick, and dry the currants and sultanas; cut the peel in thin slices; blanch the almonds and cut them in strips, remembering that it is a great mistake to *chop* almonds, as if this is done they look like badly chopped suet in the pudding. The breadcrumbs should be fine, and the flour carefully sifted and quite dry. Put the milk in an enamelled saucepan, and when it reaches boiling point, pour it over the crumbs into a large earthenware pan; add the fruit, sugar, marmalade, nutmeg, almonds, and flour, and, last of all, the eggs, well beaten, and stir until all the ingredients are thoroughly blended.

This quantity will make two good-sized puddings. Well grease the basin or moulds, and boil the puddings for 8 hours.

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understand, if there is the slightest change!" He looked at her severely.

"We'll send for you," said Aunt Jane quietly, "same as we always do."

There was a tap on the office door, and she went leisurely over.

It was the laundress with three cards in her wet hand. She half drew back as she caught a glimpse of the surgeon's bulky form. "I found them in the pocket of your apron," she announced in a stage whisper. "They got a little mite wet, but I dried 'em off."

Aunt Jane received the cards and returned to Dr. Carmon.

He glanced at them inquiringly.

"Some cards that came with flowers." She laid them on her desk.

"Somebody been sending you flowers!" He relaxed a little over his joke.

"Mr. Medfield's flowers," said Aunt Jane, tranquilly.

His pencil stopped, and he regarded the cards stiffly.

"How many cards does he send you with flowers?" he asked.

Aunt Jane smiled. "He didn't send them. They came with some flowers for *him*."

"Umph!" Dr. Carmon's pencil went on with its notes. When he had gone and Aunt Jane was alone in the office, she took up the cards and looked at them. She might take them up to Mr. Medfield now, before dinner. There would be time.

Horace Medfield had summoned Aunt Jane several times during the hurried days, and she had sent back word each time that she would come when she was not so busy.

She smiled a little as she looked down at the cards. She could see him, fuming and giving instructions that she was to come at once; and Miss Canfield's face as she took the message.

She put the cards in her pocket and went along the hall to Suite A.

Horace Medfield propped up in bed, surrounded by books and papers, looked up with a slightly scowling frown.

Aunt Jane glanced at it and crossed the room. She gathered up the books and papers from the bed and carried them to the table and laid them down. "I suppose you won't want these any more, will you? It's almost dinner time."

She sat down by him.

His face relaxed. "I haven't seen you for four days," he remarked dryly.

"I've been busy," returned Aunt Jane. "A good many folks suffering."

He was silent. She watched the face, with shrewd kindly smile.

"You hadn't thought that anybody *could* suffer maybe—anybody except you——?"

"No—I hadn't thought of anything." He looked ashamed, but he held his point. "*I've* suffered—horribly!" he said.

"I thought likely you would." Aunt Jane was placid.

He stared.

She held the cards towards him—the black-edged one on top. "They came in your flower-boxes."

He took them without seeing them. Then he glanced at the black one and pushed them away.

"The same sort that came before—isn't it?" remarked Aunt Jane serenely.

"Yes."

"I thought it was the same name. The flowers were nice that came with it—roses. Red ones."

He was silent.

"I gave Susie Cannon a bunch of them to take home with her. Her folks drink—both of them."

He stared at her. Then his face smiled a little. "It's a new cure for the drink-habit, isn't it—red roses?" He laughed a little cynically.

Aunt Jane regarded him impartially.

"Your folks—didn't ever any of them drink, did they?"

"You mean——?" His face was politely puzzled.

"Get drunk, I mean. You don't come of a drinking family, do you?"

"No." His eyes were still a little amused.

"I supposed not. Steve Cannon does—and his wife drinks. They'd broke Susie's arm between them. So she came to us."

He was looking at her thoughtfully. "How old is she?"

"Three," said Aunt Jane. "Going on for four."

"Good God!"

She nodded. "Yes, He's good. But somebody's got to look after Susie."

He waited a minute. Then he spoke, almost hesitatingly. "I don't suppose that money would do—any good?"

She shook her head. "I don't know what'll do good. Dr. Carmon's got to find out and do it. He generally does—when things get too bad."

There was a knock on the door.

"Your dinner, I guess," said Aunt Jane.

But it was Preston—with a box. When he saw Medfield's eyes he half retreated, but Aunt Jane held out her hand.

"I'll take care of it," she said. She laid it on her lap. "Miss Canfield said you weren't having them brought here any more. I suppose Preston made a mistake," she said placidly.

"*I* suppose he did," replied Medfield. His eye was on the box, balefully.

Aunt Jane took it up and undid it slowly. When she looked in she smiled. She took out a black-edged card and handed it to him. "She's sent another!"

He groaned softly.

"I don't know what we'll do—if they keep coming in like this," she said tranquilly, fingering the blossoms and looking at them.

He lay back on his pillows. "That's your affair!" He smiled more cheerfully. "You said *I* should not be bothered!" He closed his eyes.

"The children's ward is full," said Aunt Jane thoughtfully. "It's a regular flower garden—every bed's a posy-bed." She laughed comfortably and looked at him. "You ought to have seen the way they looked when they got your flowers. They were tickled to death with them!"

"I am glad they enjoyed them," said Medfield tamely.

"I felt as if it was a pity they couldn't know you sent them," she added.

He started a little, and Aunt Jane put out a hand. "Don't you worry, Mr. Medfield. I didn't tell them. I just said it was a man—by the name of 'Horace.' But maybe you'll get it, all the same."

He stared at her. "Get it?"

She nodded. "They'll be thinking about that Mr. Horace, and kind of talking about him and loving him. I reckon it'll do him good, whoever he is." She was looking at "Mr. Horace" in space, regarding him with kind gaze.

Medfield smiled grimly. "I don't suppose you know what it is not to want anyone to know who you are?"

She looked at him. "I should hate terribly not to have folks know that I'm Jane Holbrook!"

She was thoughtful a minute. "Seems as if it wouldn't be *me*—not more than half me—if folks didn't know I was Aunt Jane!" She was looking at him questioningly.

He shook his head.

"You've never been in my place." The words were dry.

"No. I have a good many things to be thankful for," she added impersonally.

His eyes were looking at something before him, and there was a little hard smile in their gaze. "Let some of them try it awhile," he said, as if answering an accusation. "Let them try!" He turned to her.

"I can't go in a tram-car, or a restaurant, or shop in town. I can't walk along the street like other men without being beset by people with axes to grind." He looked at Aunt Jane as if he thought she might have an axe concealed somewhere about her person. "They carry them around with them in their pockets," he said savagely, "ready the minute they see me coming down the street. They line up with them and wait for me to appear. The minute a man hears my name, he doesn't think of *me*, he's thinking what he can get out of me." His mouth set itself close. "I'm not a man, I'm money!"

Aunt Jane's look was full of twinkling sympathy that went out to him. "It's a pity you didn't think about that sooner, wasn't it?"

He stared.

"You might have given away most of it if you'd thought in time."

The stare broke. "You think it is easy, don't you?" he scoffed.

Her face grew sober. "No, I don't think it's easy. Money seems to stick to folks' fingers—sort of glues them together, I think."

He rubbed his thin fingers absently and looked down at them.

"It seems to me I could find a way, but I suppose I should be just like the rest, if I had it—holding on to it for dear life!" She smiled at him.

He was silent a minute, looking before him. "Sometimes I think I would give every penny I have in the world to have someone think of me apart from my money!" He looked at the face in its muslin cap. He knew he had never spoken to anyone as he was speaking to Aunt Jane. He had a sense of freeing himself from something.

He watched the face in its cap. "I don't suppose anyone can understand——" He broke off with a sigh.

"Yes, I understand, I think." She was



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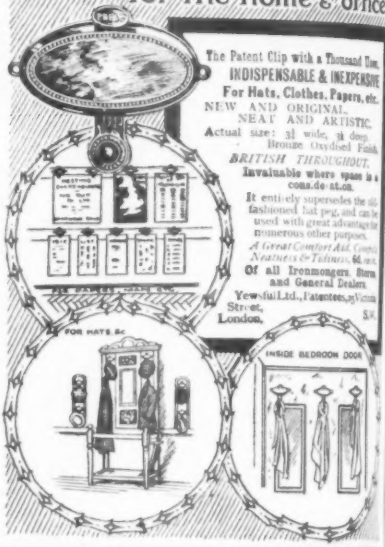
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looking down at the box of flowers in her lap. "We all have our besetting sins. I have them! I guess money's a kind of besetting sin!"

XIV

"IF I was feeling the way you do, Mr. Medfield, I'd do something."

"What would you do?" He watched her face.

"Well—I'd find things." The face in its cap filled with little thoughts that came and went. "Dear me! There are so many things! I wouldn't know which to do!"

"Suppose you tell *me* a few."

"Well—there's things. Jimmie Sullivan needs a new leg, for one thing. He needs it badly——"

"*Who* is Jimmie Sullivan?" asked the millionaire.

"He's in the children's ward. Belongs to nobody, as you might say. We're carrying him along till he gets on his feet."

"Gets on his legs, you mean?" His face had lost its fretted look; it was smiling a little.

"It's a frame-leg he needs, one of the kind that lets out and stretches as he grows. Dr. Carmon's made him one—a sort of makeshift leg. A good one costs thirty pounds."

"Would you mind giving me a pencil and paper?" said Medfield.

Aunt Jane brought them from the table, and he made a note.

"Thirty, you said?"

She nodded.

"Then there's Mrs. Pelton——"

"I don't seem to remember Mrs. Pelton," he said politely.

"Why she's the one you're——" Aunt Jane stopped suddenly.

"Yes!"

"She's a woman that came the same day you did," she said safely.

"Oh——!" His mind seemed to be looking back, to the day when he came to the House of Mercy perhaps.

Aunt Jane did not disturb him.

Presently he took up his pencil with a little sigh. "What were you saying about Mrs. Pelton?" he asked.

"She came the same day you did, and *she's* sitting up! Her case was a good deal worse than yours." She was looking at him almost severely.

"But—— She had her operation sooner than I did! *I* had to wait almost a week, you know!" He was like a sick boy, with his excuses and his injured look.

"Yes, she was operated on a day or two sooner, maybe. But she's acted better than you have, every way." She looked at him over her spectacles. "And she's a little mite of a thing—doesn't come up to your shoulder hardly."

He smiled ruefully and took up the pencil. "I am going to be good. What about this Mrs. Pelton? What would you do for her if you were as badly off as I am?"

She gave him a quick smile out of her cap. "Why—I'd—I'd—I declare I don't know just what you could *do* for her! She's got so much pluck, it almost seems as if you couldn't do much. But I can kind of see her——" She was considering. "I can see that if she had maybe twenty pounds, say, of her own, unexpectedly, when she left the hospital. I can just see the things she would do with it! There's four of the children and a kind of fiddling husband—*good*, you know. But the way men are——"

"Yes, I know." His pencil was making absent notes. "What's his business?"

"He works in a shop."

He glanced at his paper. "Is there anything else you happen to think of for me to do?" The tone was dry, but a little amused.

"Well, there's folks—plenty of folks. You don't have to be in a hospital very long before you begin to know about folks, and begin to wish you were made of money."

"It's a good place for me, then. I may get cured all through!" He laughed a little harshly.

"I hope you will," said Aunt Jane. She was looking at him with a deep, big kindness that suddenly broke through the little crust of cynicism in his face. He leaned forward and held out his hand.

"Thank you," he said.

XV

"I WONDER what I'd better do with these." She looked at the flowers in the box in her lap. "They're about the prettiest ones she's sent you—forget-me-nots." She lifted a handful of the blossoms and held them out.

He regarded them cynically. "I'm not likely to forget her!" he said.

She looked at him over the flowers and

smiled. "*She* doesn't seem to forget either. I guess she thinks a good deal of you," she added quaintly.

He shook his head. "You'd be wrong. She doesn't care any more for me than that clothes-pole there!"

Aunt Jane looked at it uncritically.

"She sent those"—he motioned to the flowers—"to Horace Medfield's money! She began on the boy," he said scornfully. "She's a dozen years older than Julian and twice as clever. I packed him off to Canada when I found out; then she started in on the old man!"

Aunt Jane looked at him with interest. "I didn't know that you had a boy! How old is he?" she asked quickly.

"Twenty-two," said Medfield.

"That's an interesting age, isn't it?" Aunt Jane was thoughtful. "That's just the age my boy would have been if he'd lived. I'm always wondering what he would be doing now." She was silent a minute. Then she looked at him and smiled. "Canada isn't so very far off," she said.

She gathered up the flowers in her lap, and glanced toward the door.

Horace Medfield's dinner was coming in.

Miss Canfield carried the big tray in both hands. Aunt Jane glanced at it and got up.

"I think I'll give your flowers to Mrs. Pelton," she said slowly. "She doesn't happen to have any flowers. Nobody's sent her any yet. She'll be pleased with them."

She cast another glance at the tray. "They've brought you a good dinner to-day—beefsteak and onions and green peas."

From the door she looked back. "I'll tell her Mr. Horace sent them."

The nurse who was bending over Horace Medfield, tucking the napkin into his coat, saw a quick flush come in the thin face. She placed the tray before him.

"Shall I cut your meat?"

"Yes, please."

He watched the efficient fingers cut the juicy steak in strips, and he glanced at the face bending above the tray. The reddish hair was drawn trimly up under the cap, and there was a look of competence in the face and in the firm hands.

She gave him his knife and fork and glanced at the tray. "You have everything you need? Here's your bell."

She placed the cord where he could reach it and turned away.

But Horace Medfield's look stayed her. "You didn't know my name was Horace, did you?" He said it with a little quizzical smile.

"I thought it was Medfield," replied the girl. She looked at him with clear, straight eyes. "The flowers come to Horace Medfield."

"That was a mistake," he said. "They got it wrong when I came, on the books. It was in the papers, I suppose. It's quite a joke that I should have had all Horace Medfield's flowers." He chuckled a little. "He's a distant relative of mine—Horace Medfield. But quite a different sort of man," he added quietly. "I don't see any salt here——?"

She glanced quickly at the tray and went out to bring the salt.

He smiled at his dinner blandly and began to eat. He would get rid of the incubus of Horace Medfield's money for a while, and see how it felt.

His whole body relaxed, and the weight of Horace Medfield went sliding from his shoulders. No more suspicions, no more watching while people talked to him, for the inevitable money to creep in, or for some philanthropic scheme to put its hand in his pocket on the sly. They seemed to think if a man had money that he doted on orphan asylums and libraries and dormitories! He wished fervently that he might never hear of another college or foundation, or any sort of institution for doing good. He longed to be rid of it all. He wanted to be like other men—a human being—for a month, for six weeks. He began to wonder how long a patient could stay in the Berkeley House of Mercy—how sick he had to be? They shouldn't turn him out *too* soon. He would invent an ache or two. He would take a long vacation from his money.

Miss Canfield brought the salt. She looked at his face as she put it down. "You're feeling better, aren't you?" she said.

He relaxed the cheerful look. "A little better," he admitted; "some pain still. Won't you sit down? Can't you stay?" he added politely.

"There's another patient waiting. They've put me on double special since you are better." She nodded to him and went out.

He watched her go, almost regretfully. It was wonderful what a difference it made, wanting to have people around, now that money could not get between. He would have liked to talk with the girl—ask her

SAVING IN WAR TIME.

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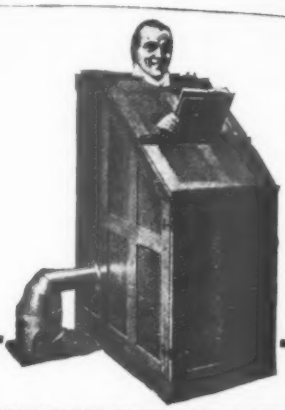
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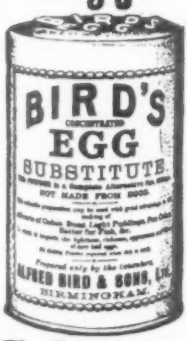
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ROCK BUNS.

(A well tried recipe — most delicious.)

Flour, 1 lb — Butter or Margarine, 4 ozs.
Sultana Raisins, 2 ozs. — A pinch of salt.
Currants, 2 ozs. — A little grated Nutmeg.
Castor Sugar, 6 ozs. — Milk, 1 teacupful.
and a tablespoonful of
BIRD'S EGG SUBSTITUTE

Rub the butter into the flour, add the Bird's Egg Substitute, sugar, currants, raisins, nutmeg and salt. Mix the whole lightly together with a wooden spoon, and moisten with the milk. Put in small heaps on a well-greased baking tin, and bake for about 20 minutes.



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Cut this advertisement out and try the recipe. E.S 9

about her family and how she came to be a nurse. He wondered what sort of a home a girl like that had come out of, and what she expected to do.

More than once, as he had watched her moving about the room, absorbed in her work, he had thought of Julian. It occurred to him to wonder what Julian would be like now. He had not seen the boy for two years—not since he sent him off to Canada. He glanced a little resentfully at the black-edged card lying on the stand beside him. If it had not been for Julia Cawein and her airs and fascinations, the boy would be here now.

His thought recurred to the girl who had just left him. He had never seen anyone work just the way she worked—as if she loved it. She moved quietly and easily, as if there were plenty of time to do all that must be done in the day. She would make a good wife for some man. And it suddenly struck him that a rich young fellow would be lucky to marry a girl like that. He wondered what Julian would think of her.

XVI

He had finished his dinner and pushed aside the tray. He wondered where Julian was, whether he had got his letter, and whether he would care—a little. It was ten days since he sent the letter—before the doctor told him; that was the day Aunt Jane took charge of his case.

He smiled a little, thinking of Aunt Jane and her ways. Since she took him in hand he had eaten and breathed and slept only as she permitted. But after all, it was a relief to get rid of thinking and do what one was told—like a boy. He wished his own boy were here to play with. He was a little lonely, after all. He found his imagination always coming back to Julian. He had hardly thought of the boy before as an individual; he had been a responsibility—someone to be kept out of scrapes—and, in a vague way, he always thought of him as the successor to the Medfield fortune and business. Now he wondered what the boy was really like. Two years might have changed him—body and soul almost.

He closed his eyes a little wearily and rested back against the pillows. The room was quiet and filled with sunshine. He felt suddenly at home in it, as he had never felt in his house across the town—the rooms were very lonely there.

A knock came on the door—perhaps the nurse for the tray. He did not turn his head or open his eyes. He was resting in the quiet.

A light step crossed the room and stopped, and presently Horace Medfield looked up.

The boy was smiling down at him. "Hallo, father!"

He put up a swift hand to brush the vision away.

And the boy took it and bent down and kissed him, almost shyly.

Then Horace Medfield reached out both hands to him. "Why—Julian! I was thinking about you!" He threw his arms around him hungrily. "I was wishing you would come!"

"Were you?" The young man laughed happily and drew up a chair to the bed. "I'm just in time, then."

He sat looking at his father; and it came to Horace Medfield that the boy was fond of him. There was a look in the clear eyes of affection and pride.

He gazed at it. "You didn't get my letter?"

"Which? The one with the cheque for a thousand?"

"The one telling you I was here."

The boy shook his head. "I got Ballantine's cable, and took the next boat."

"I didn't know Ballantine cabled," said Medfield thoughtfully.

"It came ten days ago—the thirtieth, wasn't it?—just as I was starting for Vancouver. I'm glad it didn't miss me!" They sat quiet a minute. Then the boy looked at him. "You're looking fine, sir!"

"I'm all right! Doing splendidly!"

He felt suddenly that he could let his pains go. The house across the town was not so empty, after all. He had a sudden vision of Julian running up the long stairs—two at a time—and he looked at him happily.

The boy leaned forward. His eye fell on the black-edged card; and he looked at it and smiled and half reached out a hand, incredulous.

"How is——" He hesitated. He had always been afraid of his father. But the man on the pillows was, somehow, a different sort of man; and he leaned forward with a swift twinkle at the card.

"How is the widow?" he asked.

"Very well, I suppose," said Medfield. "It is some time since I saw her." He

spoke formally. But his heart leaped a little at the touch of comradeship.

"How about this?" asked Julian. He presented the black-edged card.

Horace Medfield's face flushed—almost guiltily. "Flowers," he said.

"I say!" The boy whistled softly. Then he laughed. "I say!" He put down the card and looked at it.

"Three boxes!" acknowledged Medfield.

The boy held out his hand. "Would you mind shaking hands, sir?"

Horace Medfield took the hand, laughing a little, and his eyes filled with quiet pride and happiness. "I am glad you've come home, Julian."

"Looks to me about time!" said the youth. He glanced again at the card and chuckled. Then he stood up.

Miss Canfield had come for the tray.

She went round to the other side of the bed; and Horace Medfield looked up at her and glanced from her to his boy.

"This is my son Julian, Miss Canfield." He was watching the two faces that confronted each other across the bed.

The young man's had lighted with a little look of admiration. He held out his hand across the bed. "It's a long-distance introduction, isn't it?"

The girl took the hand quietly. "How do you do, Mr. Horace?" she said pleasantly.

"I'm glad to meet you," said Julian, with a puzzled look; and the two hands fell apart.

Horace Medfield flashed a twinkle at her. "His name is not Horace," he remarked dryly. "Nor mine," he added, after a minute. "'Horace' is for the hospital. Aunt Jane invented it."

"I see," said the girl. "I wondered a little——"

"Don't let anybody else wonder," said Medfield. "I want to get rid of myself—for a while."

The young man smiled whimsically. "Where do I come in, sir?"

"You stay where you are," said his father, tolerantly. "You're well enough as it is—if you behave!" He looked with satisfaction from his son to the young girl. She had turned to the tray and her fingers were busy with the dishes.

"She takes good care of me," said Medfield, with a little gesture toward the competent fingers.

"I don't doubt it, sir. I might almost say I wouldn't mind being ill myself!" A kind of shyness in the words redeemed them, and the girl smiled.

"People who are not ill generally think they wouldn't mind," she said quietly.

She lifted the tray and set it aside.

"I'll take out your pillows now. It's time for you to rest." She removed the pillows and shook them a little, placed the fresh one beneath his head, and straightened the clothes for him with firm, competent, comfortable hands.

The boy's eyes followed the white figure as she left the room carrying the tray lightly. They came back to his father's face.

"I think I've had my orders," he said laughingly. "I'm to go now, I understand. I'll be back by and by, sir, when you are 'rested.'" He hesitated a minute. Then he bent down and kissed his father, almost shyly, and left the room.

And Horace Medfield took his nap.

XVII

AUNT JANE came in, bearing a bunch of forget-me-nots before her.

The millionaire raised a hand. "Take them away!"

But she came tranquilly on.

"They were sent to you—special." She held them out.

He scowled at them. Then his look broke to a little bewilderment.

"They're the ones you carried off!" he exclaimed.

"The same ones," replied Aunt Jane, with satisfaction. "A woman sent them to you."

"I know who sent them!"

"You don't know this one—it's a Mrs. Pelton."

He stared at her. "The one I sent them—the one you took them to?"

She nodded. "She's sent them back."

"Didn't she like them?" His tone was hurt, almost stiff.

"Oh, she *liked* them. She said they made her almost *too* happy." Aunt Jane was arranging the flowers and smiling at them. "She only sent part of them, you see. She's divided with you."

"I see!" He looked at the flowers vaguely.

"She didn't know it was you who sent them," said Aunt Jane. She stood off to get the effect.

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No. 9K (as illus.).—Gentlemen's Superfine mull khaki Handkerchiefs, measuring about 20½ ins. with ½ in. hem, and 19½ ins. with ⅜ in. hem. The finest Khaki Handkerchiefs made. Per dozen, **5/7**

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Mellin's Food "humanises" Cow's Milk.

Add "Mellin's" to fresh cow's milk and you not only retain the *vital* properties of the fresh milk which are essential to the growth of the baby, but you so "humanise" the milk that it becomes closely similar to mother's milk—and Mellin's Food is the *only known medium for doing this*. With Mellin's Food, this fresh cow's milk can be instantly treated to suit the digestive powers of any child, of any age; and at all ages it supplies just the exact essentials for developing sturdy bodies.

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PRISONERS ILL IN GERMANY
A LETTER

Baracke Schonung, Englanderlager Ruhleben,
8th September, 1915.

Dear Sir,

We beg to thank you in the name of this camp for the sixty-seven cases of Prisoners' Comforts which you so generously sent us through the American Express Company. We found the contents most acceptable, especially the Plasmon preparations.

The writer, S. Lambert, acts as Superintendent of the Schonungs Baracke (a sort of Convalescents' Barrack), and we therefore decided not to distribute them to the camp at large, but to serve them out to the sick in this barrack who require special diet.

The authorities are giving us every assistance in carrying out the above, and are even contemplating giving us permission to build a special kitchen for these invalid requirements. It was under this head that the Plasmon preparations, especially Plasmon Oats and Plasmon Cocoa, had proved such a boon to patients suffering from gastric disorders. Again reiterating our thanks, we beg to remain, dear Sir,

Yours very sincerely,
(Signed) FRED W. HANSON.
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"Khaki Magazine," London.

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"Who did she think sent them?" he demanded.

"Why—'Mr. Horace,' I told her. You know about Mr. Horace?" She looked at him.

"Yes," meekly.

"I told her about him. So she's feeling thankful to him." Her eyes twinkled a little.

"But why should she send flowers to *me?*" He looked at her almost suspiciously, as if he had caught her.

Aunt Jane shook her head reprovingly. "She sent them to you because you happened to come the same day she did. She saw you through the door whilst she was waiting for me to come in, and it made her feel acquainted with you—coming the same day, and both having suffering to go through with. There, they look nice, don't they?" She gave a final touch to them and sat down.

He glanced at them grudgingly.

"I'll take them out if you say so—if you'd rather not have them?"

"No, leave them. I want them." The words came a little reluctantly.

"I thought you'd like them," she said placidly, "when you'd made up your mind to it. It's hard for anyone to make up his mind sometimes."

The millionaire was looking at the flowers. "I've been thinking about what you told me this morning"—he motioned to the bowl of forget-me-nots—"about Mrs. Pelton. This hospital business must be a big bill for a working-man to meet. I was wondering if it couldn't be arranged so that I could pay it—without their knowing, of course," he added hastily.

Aunt Jane was silent a minute. Then, a little guiltily, she looked at him. "You *have* paid it already," she said.

He had been looking dreamily before him, pleased with Aunt Jane, and with the flowers, and with himself—pleased with everybody. He moved irritably and stared.

She nodded, the little wrinkles gathering about her eyes. "I didn't mean that you should find it out—not right off. But it's just as well, I expect."

"What do you mean?"

"Well"—she rocked a little—"she was kind of anxious the day she came, you know. I saw as soon as I came into the room that she was worrying." Aunt Jane rocked placidly, looking back to Mrs. Pelton's worrying face. "Pretty soon it came out—they hadn't got the money; and she'd been just driven to come, as you might say. Dr. Carmon makes them come whether they want to or not, you know!" She looked at him inquiringly over her glasses.

"Yes, I know." The words were remote and dry.

Aunt Jane smiled a little. "And just then I caught sight of you through the door, and your coat lying on a chair; it was a silk-lined coat, you know—your clothes are all pretty good." She looked at him with satisfaction.

A glint of amusement crossed the remote face.

"So it came to me, then and there, just the way the things do—the right ones, when you're bothering—and I said to her that *you* were going to pay for her."

She sat looking at him.

"Well?"

She roused herself. "You never saw anybody change so—right in a minute, that way. I do wish you could have seen her!" She gave a pitying glance at the handsome figure on the pillow. "It seems a pity, though, to do so much for everybody and not have the good of seeing it!"

"How do you know I will pay the bill?" asked the millionaire grimly.

She turned and stared, and a little gleaming smile twinkled at him. "Why—you *have* paid already! Leastways, your lawyer's paid. He sends a cheque every week—the way you told him—to pay the bill; and I've made it out big enough for two, right along." Her face was complacent and kind.

"Do you call that business?" He asked it almost sharply.

"No—not business—just good sense, I guess—and decency."

"I call it crooked dealing," said the millionaire. Something of the old, gripping look came into the shapely hands lying on the bed.

Aunt Jane surveyed him and rocked on. "How much do you reckon your life is worth, Mr. Medfield?" she said after a little pause.

"I'm insured for——" He stopped.

She nodded. "That wasn't what I meant—but it will do. Whatever it is, we've saved it for you—among us. We've given you the best care we knew how. You've had good care, haven't you?" She bent a solicitous look on him.

"The best of care," he said courteously. Then, after a minute, "Money could not pay for it—the kind of care you have given. I have not forgotten the night—when I went down in the dark—and you held me." He was looking at her with something deep and quiet in his gaze.

Aunt Jane returned it a minute—and looked away. There was something in the face of the millionaire she had not seen. She got up and went to the window.

"What I meant was," she said slowly, "some folk have big bills, and some folk have little ones, and some don't have any. It depends on what the Lord has given them; and we mean to treat them all alike."

He smiled. "Well, the Lord has given me plenty. I ought not to complain."

"I didn't expect you would complain—when I did it," said Aunt Jane. "I put it in the bill under Suite A, enough for two. And I told Dr. Carmon to make *his* bill big enough for two. I expect he'll do it."

Mr. Medfield relaxed a little and looked at her whimsically. "It's a human way to do," he said thoughtfully. "And I do get *something* for my money. This is a very pleasant room."

[TO BE CONTINUED]



A Street Scene in Tunis.

Photo: Printing Craft.

"Where are you going to, my pretty maid?"
"To order a gas stove, sir," she sayed,
"Sir," she sayed,
"Sir," she sayed,
"We've no use for coal, kind sir," she sayed.



The MAID *and the* COALHEAVER

Coalheavers are dead—there's no doubt about *that*—dead as a door nail!

Dead, of course, in the domestic sense. The modern domestic couldn't abide him and his nasty, messy, troublesome coal. So she struck.

First of all she struck for a Gas-Cooker, and she got it—then for Gas Fires, and she got them, too—and finally for a Gas Water-Heater, and they gave her that, too!

And people said "What in the world are we coming to?"

But since the maid was always clean and tidy, and had more time to spare for other domestic duties—

and people found that they always had hot baths when they wanted them, and cheerful fires in every room, and well-cooked, dainty food—they began to think that the modern maid was right.

As, of course, she *was*!

And *now* people are beginning to ask: "What *is* a coalheaver?"

The British Commercial Gas Association,
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DAINTY AND INEXPENSIVE REST FROCKS

designed by our own artist and made in our own workrooms from rich quality materials. The value of these gowns is quite exceptional, while the cut, style, and finish are of a particularly high order.

CHARMEUSE TEA FROCK (*as sketch*). Adapted from an exclusive Paris model, in rich quality silk charmeuse, with new full pleated skirt, either short or long, and loosely draped bodice, finished with charmeuse cabochon and chiffon under bodice and sleeves. In Black, White, and all colours **78/6**



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CONVERSATION·CORNER

CONDUCTED *BY*
THE·EDITOR

Of Course it will Hurt

THE story is told of how a Norwegian lighthouse-keeper and his wife one day went ashore, and before they could return they were overtaken by a storm. As it began to get dark, the two children who were left in the lighthouse began to wonder how they could light the lighthouse lamp. They made many attempts to light the lamp, but all were in vain—it was out of their reach; so they went down and got their own lamp, lit it, and then went to put it in the window; but even with the aid of a chair they were not tall enough. As they were thinking what else they could get to stand on, the little boy said to his sister, "You get down off the chair, and I will lie across it, and then, if you stand on me and hold the lamp up, it will shine through the window." And this the children did. After some time the little girl's arm began to ache, and, looking down to her brother, she said, "Am I hurting you?" "Of course you are hurting me," was the reply; "but keep your arm up, so that the light will shine."

Another War Christmas

I AM indebted to the Annual Report of the South American Missionary Society for the above story. I agree that it has a bearing on the present situation. In my December number I usually couple my Christmas greetings to my readers with an appeal on behalf of the great charitable institutions that do so much to keep the spirit of Christmas alive in our midst.

This will be another war Christmas, and I am sure that the men at the front, the wounded in the hospitals, the disabled in health and fortune, will not be forgotten. But I want strongly to insist on our duty of keeping alive those permanent agencies of helpfulness the need of which was so thoroughly demonstrated before the war, and whose usefulness now is apparent to those who take the trouble to observe. Now we ought to have clearly in our minds that whatever in the way of war charity we put our hands to ought to be *something extra* beyond what we usually give. Merely to divert our giving from ordinary charities to war objects is not patriotism, but cruelty. But with the increase in prices, the difficulties of trade, the income tax? Well, here comes in the point of the story. Of course it will hurt; but, like the little lighthouse children, the question for us is: Are we going to keep our arm up, or are we going to let the light go out?

For South America

TAKE the South American Missionary Society, for instance. This energetic body is doing a splendid work in a vast continent. At the time of writing it is £8,000 in debt. Who will help to keep the light burning in what is indeed a very dark place? The Secretary is the Rev. Alan Ewbank, 20 John Street, Bedford Row, London, W.C.

Dr. Barnardo's

LITTLE need be said about Dr. Barnardo's, as our own QUIVER Companionship constantly reminds us of our duty to its Homes. But Dr. Barnardo's has the remarkable record of claiming at least 1,544 serving in the Army and Navy. It is something to have rescued these brave men from destitution and sent them forth to serve their country; but there are on an average 7,480 children always in residence. These have to be fed, clothed, provided for, and a constant stream of help is required.

The National Refuges

ANOTHER institution which has done invaluable work is the National Refuges for Homeless and Destitute Children, from which over 600 have joined the

Colours since the outbreak of war. The funds of this admirable Society have been badly hit by the war, and help is urgently needed if the work is to be maintained.

Deep Sea Fishermen

THE war has revolutionised the work of the deep sea fishers. A large number of them are now engaged in trawling for submarines instead of for fish, and the risks they take are naturally great. The Royal Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen is doing a splendid work in helping these men, and deserves every support.

A Large Family

ABOUT 500 children—a large family indeed!—of the Orphan Working School and Alexandra Orphanage, at Haverstock Hill, N.W., are dependent day by day upon voluntary contributions. Mr. Alexander Grant, 73 Cheapside, London, E.C., hopes to receive the valued help of our readers in keeping things going. Contributions may be sent to me for this—as for all the other funds mentioned. They will be promptly forwarded and duly acknowledged in THE QUIVER.

The Homes for Little Boys

READERS of THE QUIVER have a special interest in the Homes for Little Boys, Farningham and Swanley, for one of THE QUIVER Companionship boys is being trained in that institution. Anyone who has paid a visit to Farningham or Swanley knows how thoroughly well the home conditions are reproduced there: no cheerless barracks, and nothing of the "institutional" type of thing. In the training of the boys individuality is developed, and efficiency well maintained. The result is seen in the high record of the old boys of the Homes—in the Army and Navy, in the colonies, in the Merchant Service, and all over the world. This is a trying time for the Homes, and Mr. Percy Roberts, the Secretary, will cordially welcome Christmas gifts from our readers.

Waifs and Strays

LORD KITCHENER says: "I know that the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society has done, and is doing, good work, especially by their care of the families of those who are fighting for us." The Society rescues children who are destitute, cruelly treated, homeless, or in moral danger, and has over 4,600 children now under its care. All Church of England people ought to rally to the support of this excellent institution.

Among the Miners

MINERS are among the most important members of the community from an economic point of view, and it is only right that the Glynn Vivian Miners' Mission should devote itself exclusively to their spiritual needs. The work is interdenominational in character, and one of the mission stations in France is still in possession of the Germans. The Society is helping the distressed people in the French mining district, and deserves our cordial support.

Queen Alexandra and Incurables

QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S tender sympathy with those in distress has firmly enthroned her in the hearts of her people. To no section of suffering humanity has Her Majesty given more thought and help than to people of the middle classes stricken and incapacitated by incurable disease. When, more than fifty years ago, the Queen Mother first came to England, she very quickly made herself acquainted with the work of the British Home and Hospital for Incurables. Since then her helpful interest in the institution has never ceased nor diminished. A donation of £500 from the "Alexandra Day" Fund is ample proof of that.

The work of this really invaluable institution is well known to my readers. They will be sorry to learn that, as I write, there is a serious shortage of funds. Every day the sum of £50 is required for the maintenance of existing operations. At the end of the last financial year the ordinary income was £4,500 below the ordinary expenditure. That is causing great anxiety to the committee, as there are not only 80 inmates in the Home and 380 pensioners on the books to be provided for; there are also the wounded soldiers, 215 of whom have been nursed and tended since the outbreak of the war. Mr. Edgar Penman, the Secretary, will most gratefully welcome any help our readers can give. His address is 72 Cheapside, London, E.C.

And now, a Happy Christmas to every reader, with the joy of good work cheerfully done.

The Editor

Good Living for All—and Cheap!

A very delicious dish, which is both wholesome and full of nutriment, is **Stewed Prunes or Figs served with**

Bird's

the Nutritious Custard.



Without the use of a single egg, you obtain with BIRD'S Custard a creamy richness which is simply a revelation, and the cost per person of a dish of BIRD'S Custard is trifling.

Serve the BIRD'S Custard with the prunes, when freshly made and hot; or, if preferred, well whisked and cold.

Method:—Take ½-lb. of Prunes, or Figs, and well rinse in cold water, soak in a pint of water for six hours, or all night; add ½-lb. sugar (¼-lb. for the Figs), a tablespoonful of lemon juice, and bake slowly in a tar for 1½ hours, or until tender.

2 pkts. for 1½d. 4d & 7½d Boxes and large 9½d Tins.

Cary



INFANT FEEDING

during and after Weaning.

FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE CUT TEETH, from the beginning of the seventh month, or for those who have not, from the beginning of the eighth month, a thin gruel made with Milk and Robinson's "Patent" Groats, for at least one meal daily, will be found most useful.

AFTER THE NINTH MONTH the quantity of "Patent" Groats may be increased with advantage. Medical testimony fully endorses popular approval for this stamina-giving food; analysis shows that it contains all the elements of bone, muscle, fat and nerve.

Robinson's "Patent" Groats may also be prescribed, with excellent results, to expectant and nursing mothers, invalids, and the aged.

First introduced in 1823, nearly 100 years ago.

ROBINSON'S "PATENT" GROATS.

Send for Booklet, "Advice to Mothers," Dept. Q.

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It is important for you to know that Benger's is not a pre-digested food, and it does not contain dried milk nor malt nor chemical food substance.

It is a natural cereal food combined with natural digestive principles. It is prepared with fresh new milk, with which it combines to form a delicious food cream, assimilable to the most weakly digestion, and safe to give under almost all conditions.

BENGER'S Food

is for Infants, Invalids, and the Aged, and for all whose digestive powers have become weakened.

Post free: to all who have the care of Infants and Invalids, a 48-page Booklet —"Benger's Food and How to Use It."

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Branch Offices:—
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107 *Benger's Food is obtainable throughout the world of Chemists, Stores, etc.*

EE A MOTHER'S EE
HAPPY THOUGHT.

A lady writing from Ireland says:—"I went to see my sister's baby, who was very ill indeed. She had been up for nights with him without undressing; he was crying all the time as with some internal pain. The doctor told her he could do nothing except put him in a warm bath, which gave him a little ease for the time being.

"I thought of STEEDMAN'S SOOTHING POWDERS which I used for my own children; and next day I sent some to my sister, when she gave the child half a powder according to directions. For the first time for a fortnight she and the baby, and, in fact, all the household, had a good night's sleep, and the little fellow has continued to improve ever since."

These powders do not contain poison, nor are they a narcotic; but they act gently on the bowels, thus relieving feverish heat and preventing fits, convulsions, etc.

Please notice that the name STEEDMAN is always spelt with EE.

EE





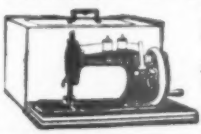
KNIFE CLEANING A THING OF THE PAST.

THE PRIZE MEDAL "ARCANUM" CUTLERY.

The Cutlery of the Elite. Requires no cleaning except washing. Unaffected by climate or use. Is not stained by vinegar or other acids. Is equalled for Presents. A clean sharp knife, always ready for use. If unobtainable locally, send your card to the Inventor and Sole Manufacturer—

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The Cornish Granite Sculptors.
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How, When and
Where Corner,
Christmas, 1915

MY DEAR CHUMS,—To each one of you I send at this moment a thought-wish across the distance which separates us. It is that you may have a "Happy Christmas and New Year." Many of you will be sending me greetings. Will each one of you try to believe that this little word of mine is for *you* as an individual, exactly as if we two were sitting together by the fireside in Our Corner?

Just before I went to Scotland for a short autumn rest, our Editor was telling me of his Christmas Number plans. "Give your boys and girls a message for Christmas," was his suggestion for our part of the magazine. And often in my little holiday the thought was teasing: "What shall be that Christmas message for my boy and girl Companions?" The old kind of Christmas—the Christmas of even two years ago—seems so impossible *now*. And from letters I receive from boy and girl friends in various parts of the world I know that life is changing for very many, and lots of us are having bad times with all sorts of problems to which we cannot find answers; and some feel that happiness just now is impossible, or even, if possible, is wrong. Some wonder *why* the war is allowed; others fear that God cannot *care* really, or He would stop it. So many we loved dearly are gone from us; how can we go on as before? These are only the merest hints as to the thoughts and shadowy ideas that trouble numbers of us in these days.

So many and so difficult are the puzzling questions which we ask ourselves. And many sorrows and hurts have come to us all. Even our youngest Companions share in them more or less. We all *feel sore*, really, and sometimes wonder if we can ever be merry and free and light-hearted again.

You will understand, then, that with this knowledge I felt I simply must have some cheering thought to back up, as it were, my Christmas wish for you Companions. And then one day among the mountains it came to me. Shall I tell you how the thought started? We had had a dull, sunless morning, a little misty rain, but not more. After lunch I went out at once, for I had chosen a rendezvous at which to meet some little Highland children who lived near where I was staying. I had my knitting in one pocket of my waterproof, and Bella, one of the children, was to bring hers. She was doing her first piece of knitting—a belt, by the way, for one of our London babies. Mine was a little vest that I had promised to show her. On sunny afternoons, when not on a long walk, I used to lie on the open hill-side—like a sun-greedy lizard. But for damp or very windy afternoons I had discovered a cosier place in a hollowed-out part of the hill, where a big stone made a "comfy" seat. We had a happy half-hour or more together. Then the three bigger children had "to go a message," and little Peggy decided she would stay with me longer. We made a boat from a sheet of note-paper, and had games of sending porridge and peat up to London, bringing all sorts of nice things back to ——. And it was while Peggy was refilling her boat once that the message-thought started in my mind—for I had been thinking of you before our games began.

Right opposite where I was sitting were the Cairngorm Mountains—Cairntoul, Braeriach, Ben Macdhui, Cairngorm, and the rest. You who love the mountains understand how they always fascinate, and know that one *must* be watching the changing lights and shadows about them from moment to moment. All that morning they had been mist-covered, and the Spey was dull and lead-like below, though sunlight had gleamed fitfully on the other side of the southern hills. And then there came one of those quick, flashing changes that mountain lovers know so well. All the dark, menacing, angry clouds were vanquished, the veiling mists melted away, and radiant sunshine illumined the whole valley and the wonderful hills beyond. The patch of snow on a farther Cairngorm peak showed with an extra brilliancy, and the stretches of the fading heather on the moors were a purple glory again. How beautiful it all was no words could describe!

Those of you who are history students have some idea of what darkness shadowed the earth when the first Christmas Day dawned, and how black it all was when He came who was to

> "teach His brethren, and inspire
> To suffer and to die."

And I think it will help us so much in these days of our perplexity and grief if we try to realise the fact that, just as the sun was all the while above those massive clouds over the

Cairngorms that day, and the gloom was compelled to pass, so Christ's Spirit is in the world to-day, and is bound to triumph ultimately. Never before was there as much evidence of His Spirit of sacrifice and love. Think of your soldier brothers and fathers and friends; think of the doctors and nurses and of people in various kinds of work—all *giving*, life itself, if needs be, for others; think of the love and self-giving of those who cannot fight in the field, but have the hard tasks that have to be faced by those who must stay at home—and you will begin to see what I mean. I believe firmly that out of all this chaos we—the world, that is—*are* moving on towards a nobler and higher and fuller life—that *all*, every sacrifice, every impulse of love, gentleness, and the surrender of self for others, *must* have great results. It cannot but be otherwise. "There shall never be one lost good!" And we can find thoughts of happiness and inspiration this Christmas if we look round and notice the evidences that the Christ spirit is spreading. Out of that search will come to us, I am sure, a call to a finer purity, greater love, and the devotion of ourselves. Do you remember in Tennyson's story of the defence of Lucknow he says—

> "Each of us fought as if hope for the garrison hung but on him"?

I cannot see how Christ's purpose can possibly be fulfilled and all the life of the world become what He would have it to be except through individuals—men and women and boys and girls. And if this Christmas time we ask that His Spirit shall come to dwell in us, to control and teach, then we shall each become a centre of love and light. Everyone who truly does this will have a new power, and be a force for progress towards a more beautiful and noble new-world life. The feeling that the Lucknow defenders had, "as if hope hung but on *him*," is, I fancy, the spirit in which most of our men have fought for our freedom. And it is that thought, *that each one of us counts*, which will make us keen and ready to play our part. So I pass on to you these suggestions: Do your share, whether it is at school, or work, or in play, as though everything depended on *you*; take wide views, and you will learn by experience that if the shadows rest on your life for the moment, the Light is still shining, and is *bound to overcome the darkness*.

Birthday Notes and News

On my desk here is a big sheaf of Birthday letters. I am not going to attempt to read all of them to you. For me each one had its own message and brought me pleasure. "Thank you," everyone who wrote; it is impossible for me to send personal notes of thanks to each. In these days we all have our time full, and it was a joy to find that such a number of Companions remembered our Day and the three children for whose maintenance we have become responsible. Let me run quickly through this pile and tell you some bits of news.

DORIS LONGTON (Yorks), who is a young journalist, sent a Birthday gift of 5s.

"I have been very busy helping with the National Registration," she says. "I distributed over 500 forms at 184 houses, and collected and corrected them. All the enumerators in our town wore white silk armlets on which were printed the words, 'National Registration, Borough of ——,' the number of our district, and the coat-of-arms of our town. It was very amusing and interesting work, and on the whole we met with much kindness. One lady brought me a glass of milk, because she thought I looked tired."

I noticed this autumn the particularly generous way our men—not only "kilties," but soldiers and sailors of all descriptions—were treated at the Scottish railway stations. I do not mean treated to "drinks." Tea and scones, fruit, cigarettes, and chocolates were in readiness in various places. I have a picture in mind now of one of the large junction stations where the express on which I was travelling stopped at night. There were large numbers of soldiers and sailors among the passengers; several girls, with men and women who probably had sons or even grandsons at the Front, were waiting. They carried baskets with lovely flowers, and all the "comforts" I have named and others; and I do not think any one of those for whom the gifts were intended missed his share, with kind words as well.

JESSIE ANDERSON (Glasgow) has been making the best of the demand for sweets for our "Tommies" and helping our work at the same time. She sends me half a sovereign, which was the profit of her sales during August.

"Quite a lot of the sweets," she says, "were bought to send out to France, and some have been sent to the Dardanelles, where such luxuries are greatly appreciated."

ALLISON LAIDLAW (Ireland) raised half a crown for our S.E.D. Another half a crown, and the winning of two new Companions represents MAUD ARMSTRONG'S (Northumberland) special effort. I will introduce the new friends soon. ISABEL DOBSON (Lancashire) made 5s. by selling flowers from her garden since Easter.

"Mother was away from home for seven weeks in the early summer," Isabel says, "so I was kept busy housekeeping, and my poor garden got rather neglected."

But Isabel's earnings were an excellent total, and it is kind of her to keep them for our children.

I was pleased to hear again from ISABEL YOUNG (Wilts). A gift of 5s. was in her letter, of which 3s. 5d. was for our Birthday. Part of the latter was earned by fruit picking. EMILY PRETSELL (Midlothian) sent me, with her gift, a snapshot of a happy picnic party laden with their provisions. KATHLEEN PARNELL (South Wales) has found pleasure in Gertrude Brauen's picture of the bluebells. "I love to hear anything about the country"; she had stayed in the country for several weeks in the spring, "when the primroses and violets were out." Kathleen asked me to accept 1s. as a little S.E.D. gift sent with her love.

It was very disappointing, while I was away on holiday, that the lateness of trains on the Highland Railway made me miss seeing some of our Companions. JEAN BEST and ELEANOR CHAMBERS-HUNTER (Aberdeenshire) had arranged what would surely have been a jolly afternoon tea party for me. But we were so late in getting to the junction at which I had



The Homes for Little Boys

Farningham and Swanley, Kent.

Where 500 Boys of all denominations are received in infancy, properly fed and clothed, given a sound education, taught a useful trade, and thereby thoroughly equipped for the Battle of Life.

Patrons: Their Majesties the King and Queen,
AND
Queen Alexandra, whose first public act in England was to lay the foundation stone of these Homes.

President: THE MARQUIS OF ABERDEEN.

THE WAR!

Boys have been sent into forty-one of His Majesty's Regiments, and over 400 old Boys are now taking part in the war. **In addition, forty-five of the senior boys at Farningham are now working at Messrs. Vickers, Sons & Maxim on the manufacture of mines and machine guns.**

Forty-two lads, orphaned by the war, sons of soldiers and sailors, have already been admitted to the care of the Homes. Thirty of these are the sons of men who lost their lives on H.M. Ships: "Aboukir." "Amphion," "Bulwark," "Cressy," "Formidable," "Good Hope," "Hawke," "Hermes," "Invincible," "Princess Irene," "Viknor."

HELP IS URGENTLY NEEDED. These Homes are supported entirely by voluntary contributions.

Treasurer—LORD BLYTH.
Chairman—WALTER HAZELL, Esq., J.P.

Secretary—PERCY ROBERTS,
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It costs £438 a day

to maintain the vast work which the Y.M.C.A. is doing for our soldiers and sailors. There are now more than 1,000 Y.M.C.A. centres throughout the Empire for the men of His Majesty's Forces: 83 in France, 40 in India, 30 in Egypt and the Dardanelles, 3 in Mesopotamia, 2 in Malta, in addition to hundreds in the camps at home.

The National Council of the Y.M.C.A. earnestly appeal for the means to carry on and extend this important work. It is estimated that £250,000 will be required to meet the most pressing needs during this the second year of the War. *Will you send your own gift to-night?*



Urgently Needed.

8 Y.M.C.A. Buildings for the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, costing £500 each.

25 Y.M.C.A. Huts for France, costing £450 each.

57 Supplementary Rooms for Classes, Meetings, etc., costing £75 each.

Donations should be addressed to Capt. R. L. Barclay, J.P., National Council of Y.M.C.A.'s, 13, Russell Sq., London, W.C.

Will you post this To-day?

To Capt. R. L. BARCLAY, J.P.,
National Council of the Y.M.C.A.'s,
13, Russell Square, London, W.C.

I have pleasure in enclosing £.....
towards the special work of the Y.M.C.A.
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Address.....



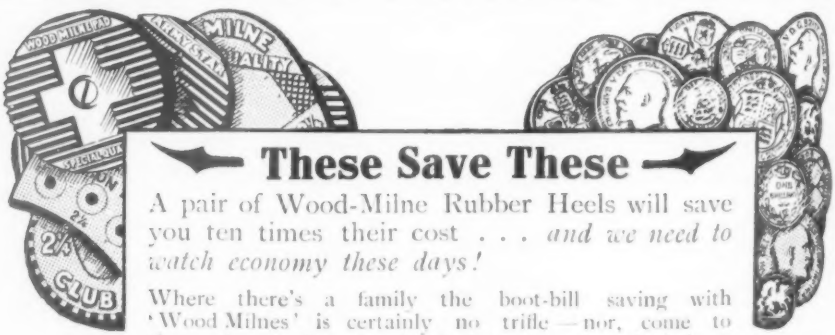
LET YOUR LITTLE PEOPLE make their own Toys—all these are modelled in

PLASTICINE

You would be charmed if you could see these little figures as they actually are. The Cook with the great big knife has a dark blue dress and a big white apron. The funny Jack-in-the-Box is brilliant in a crimson and white Plasticine Jacket, with a black face and white hair. The box—which is a wooden box—is covered with purple Plasticine, and the charming little figure of the Fairy has a bright yellow Plasticine dress, and by mixing white and crimson Plasticine together before modelling the face, arms and legs, a beautiful flesh tint is procured. The grotesque Brownie is modelled in dark brown with a green cap. They are most delightful to look at, but it is the making of them which affords so much pleasure to little people. Let them try to copy one or more figures in this group—first get them some Plasticine.

Modelling Outfits complete, **1/10, 2/5, 2/11, 3/5, 5/7,** etc., post free. Or in 1 lb. packets—Grey, Red, Green, Blue, Light Blue or Yellow, **1/6**; Crimson, Brown, Mauve or White, **1/3**; postage, 5d. extra.

HARBUTT'S PLASTICINE, LTD., 27 BATHAMPTON, BATH



These Save These

A pair of Wood-Milne Rubber Heels will save you ten times their cost . . . *and we need to watch economy these days!*

Where there's a family the boot-bill saving with 'Wood Milnes' is certainly no trifle—nor, come to that, the saving in headaches, 'nerviness,' fatigue.

'Wood-Milnes' add a new zest to your exercise—so they help your health. They make you 'step it out' with greater joy—make all roads 'easy roads'—make the longest way round seem like the shortest way home! If they *are* 'Wood-Milnes'!

Wood-Milne

RUBBER HEELS AND TIPS

Made in many shapes and sizes—in black, brown and grey rubber—better, more durable rubber than any other rubber heels. Every genuine pair clearly stamped 'Wood-Milne.' It's best to let the bootman fix them for you. *No increase in price.*

R 275

to change that it was impossible for me to go through in time. Perhaps I may have "better luck" another time. Jean sent me 10s. 6d., of which 6s. 6d. was made by "The Violet Magazine" and 4s. as a S.E.

"Eleanor and I made doll needle-books this year in the British and Belgian colours and sold them. I sold four at 1s. each. I hope you will get a lot of money this time. It will be interesting to hear what everyone has been doing."

EUNICE TAYLOR (New Zealand) wrote a very kind letter, and enclosed a gift; MARGARET HARDING (Wilts), MARY and NORA SMITH (Cumberland) also; WINIFRED TOPLISS, too, who is away from home, doing postal duty.

"I was wondering on my birthday," she writes, "if we couldn't manage to send a birthday gift every year for Our Fund—say 6d. or 1s., or even more—as an extra gift on our birthday. I believe most of us could do it. It would be rather nice if we could have a birthday card printed, and all those who give have one with their name on."

HELEN GILLMER (Ireland) earned part of her gift by cutting and drying a friend's lavender for her. ADAH POLLARD-URQUHART (Perthshire) earned money from her father by collecting fir cones and beech nuts—"patriotic" work, that, in several senses.

"It is splendid to think how well the Companionship has prospered during its six years," writes Adah, "and your talks in the Corner Pages stimulate us to further efforts."

A Concert and a Collection

KITTY WILLERS and ELSIE SMITH (Cambs) had a joint effort for our Birthday celebration. They sent me interesting accounts and a copy of the programme of their concert. One friend who was to have helped could not keep her engagement, so our two Companions and their other helper had a busy time. It must have been a very happy afternoon though, I fancy, and a net result of 17s. 2d. for Our Fund was a delightful surprise for me and for you. Kitty had made things to sell during the interval—"as I am not at all musical," she says; Elsie had written a charade for the occasion, and played, and did some dances. We must congratulate both these Companions, and also thank Mrs. Willers, who lent her dining-room and gave prizes for the competitions.

DOROTHY LITTEN sent me 4s. as her S.E.D. gift, but did not tell me how she made it. Another successful enterprise was undertaken by our Companions in Anglesey. MADGE WILLIAMS wrote:

"As we were unable to have our little sale of work, Margery and I asked a number of people who had helped us last year to *give* us a few pence this time. The result was more than we dared hope for. I hope you will be pleased: at the present time it is rather difficult to get money, is it not?"

This was a particularly plucky attempt, I consider, and I am indeed pleased, and glad to have the £1 7s. 6d. which our friends raised in this way. MARGERY and MOLLIE each send me letters with Madge's.

"We are so glad we have some money for the children," wrote Mollie. "I sold two cakes for mamma. She made them. We did not think we should get so much money as we have."

Our united thanks go to these Companions also, as well as to the mothers and other friends who helped them to make their effort such a success.

DOROTHY COLLYER (Canada) said:

"Kathleen wanted me to write you a Birthday letter. We both hope you will have every success. Kathleen thanks you very much for the letter you sent her. She cannot use her hand yet."

From a West Indian member comes a gift which gives me unusual pleasure. JOCELYN D'ARCY sends 13s., most of which has been given by "soldier boys" who, in that little island in the West, were fitting themselves to come over and fight for our Empire. "Some day," says our Companion, "when secrecy is not necessary, I shall write you a long letter about our contingent." And an interesting letter that will be, I have no doubt. Meanwhile we send our affectionate thanks for the gift, and our wishes that all our West Indian soldier friends may pass in safety through their coming experiences. All our differences of nationality and creed and colour are of such small account beside that fact of British citizenship which unites us the world over, and the great ideals of freedom for which we are contending. Please pass on our message, Jocelyn.

An Australian Correspondent

writes the letter next to my hand. EILEEN NELSON (Victoria) touches the same subject:

"Are you not proud of our Australian men? I am sure you are. But of course we are all in the one family, are we not? I am so very glad we are all part of the great British Empire."

Eileen sends her gift with the comment: "I am so glad and proud to be able to help with Our Fund, and I only wish I could do more."

Curiously enough, the letter beneath Eileen's is from Australia also. ALICE BISHOP sent me as a souvenir her "Australia Day" badge. It was kind of her. She wrote before our S.E.D., but was hoping to do something for it.

"We are all working hard out here for the soldiers. Nearly every lady and girl you meet in the trams, trains, and boats is knitting for the soldiers."

PHYLLIS BRISSENDEN (Kent) sees rather a lot of our men as they pass through her town:

"It makes one feel so 'small' when one thinks how marvellously and cheerfully our men endure all their hardships and suffering."

Phyllis was also among the S.E.D. helpers.

ENID and MYFANWY FELIX (Warwickshire), MARTHA REID (Perthshire), DOROTHY ARMSTRONG (Northumberland), WINNIE JOHNSTON (Orkney)—I know all will be sorry to hear that Winnie was thrown from her horse and had a hip bone fractured; happily she was very cheery: "I felt quite like a wounded soldier," she remarked, apropos of a journey home on a stretcher—BETTY BALFOUR (Jamaica), EDITH PENN (Somerset), JEANIE FORBES (Aberdeenshire), ENID and IDA JONES (South Wales), DOROTHY DUNGWORTH (Yorkshire), and ELSIE HIBBERD (London), are among other senders of Birthday letters and gifts to the "Violet" Fund whom I wish especially to thank.

WINIFRED M. RIDLEY (Essex) tells me of a

motor holiday she has had in Cornwall; GIRLIE BUDD wrote from an address in Hampshire, where she was filling in time in some work while waiting to get into the —— Hospital as a probationer. She had been working for our Birthday effort, making "mascots." Her magazine "is still existing, but my time is rather limited just now," she wrote. All good wishes, Girlie, for your new work. A nurse has such unlimited chances for "helping lame dogs" and generally being an influence for all that is good and beautiful, and you, I know, will be one of the "ideal nurses."

By the way, our Letter Prize for this month goes to a member who sends me a word-picture of some of her experiences in a Red Cross hospital. You will all like to read her letter, which for lack of space will have to be held over until next month. I will not tell her name, but she is among our old, constant members.

Will you now say "Welcome" to several new members, please?

KATHERINE M. PRINCE (age 16; Sussex) is a keen member of the Girl Scouts. She likes drawing competitions best of all. We will have another early in the New Year, Katherine.

JEAN WRIGHT (age 17) is another Scottish member. She is learning Post Office work, and finds it most interesting. She sends me some verses written by a friend in the Seaforth Highlanders while in France.

JANIE MCDOUGALL (age 14; Midlothian) will perhaps send a letter soon. She has a good, clear handwriting, judging from her coupon.

WINIFRED COLEMAN (age 23; London) says:

"A few weeks ago I was travelling in a tram with a friend who happened to be reading THE QUIVER. I had already heard a little of you from her, and thought it a good opportunity to find out more about it . . . and I am interested enough to ask if I may become one of your Companions too. I think your motto a beautiful one. —— has also told me how you have been able to help her at different times. Hoping I may be of some little use."

EILEEN MURPHY (age 17) lives in Hertfordshire.

"I noticed your appeal," she says, "for babies' woollen vests for Christmas. I was very much taken with the idea, so I have knitted one white vest, and I hope to do more. With best wishes for the success of the Corner."

DOROTHY (age 17) and ETHEL SKINNER (age 14) are the two members whom MAUD ARMSTRONG captured for us as her S.E.D. effort. Their coupons and note came on our Birthday, I hope for long letters from them soon.

From other Friends

A gift came to me a short while ago from a reader who said:

"I so much enjoy reading the Companionship Pages (and I think the Companions do so much good), though I am married, that I have much pleasure in sending you ——, and wish it could be more. Yours very sincerely, ——

"P.S.—My husband is ——, and has been at the Front since the very beginning, and the letters brighten things very much for me."

Just a few weeks after a card came telling me that her husband, Captain ——, had been killed at the Front. I know all of you, my Companions, will join me in affectionate sympathy with this friend in her sorrow and loneliness.

Another gift has come from an anonymous reader. "For the three children" is typed on the note-paper enclosing 3s. The postmark is Glasgow. This reader will please believe we are very glad of the kind thought and gift.

This is another letter:

"DEAR ALISON,—I have taken THE QUIVER now for two years. I am the mother of two little girls, ages 5 and 6 years. I read the letters of your Companions to them, and they are both very interested indeed. Our home is in G——, but we are staying with my parents in ——. Grandpa has given Irene and Florence a shilling each, which they very much wish to send to Alison. So please find postal order for 2s., which they send with their love. If all goes well we hope to do something for the Special Effort Day next year, and my two girls, when they are older, hope to become Companions. Wishing you every success in all the good work."

That is a pleasant note to find in one's Letter Box, is it not? I am very glad of the gifts, IRENE and FLORENCE, and shall like to have you as Companions as soon as Mother thinks you may join.

Please send me lots of letters this holiday time, and believe me, your affectionate Companion,

Alison.

P.S.—The following is our account from July 1st to September 30th, 1915:

Brought forward, £11 10s. 4½d.: Phyllis Brissenden, 5s.; Mrs. N. H. Murphy (U.S.A.), 3s. 3d.; Marjorie and Irene Collier (New Zealand), 10s.; Betty Aylward, 6d.; Mildred Lopp (Jamaica), 1s. 6d.; Frances M. Boston, 4s.; Gertie B. Foster, 1s. 6d.; Agnes S. Gentles, 4s.; Agnes Milliner (Jamaica), 2s.; Kathleen N. Cooke (Jamaica), 1s.; Mary Jack, 2s. 6d.; Dora and Harry Blades, 2s.; Margaret Harding, 1s.; Helena Beck (South Africa), 2s.; Marguerite Beck (South Africa), 2s.; Dorothy Chandler (New Zealand), 1s.; Clara Millar, 1s.; Bertha Millar, 1s.; Marion Webb, 1s.; QUIVER Reader (Truro), 10s.; Hettie Hughes, 8s.; Irene Phillips, 3s.; Emily Marshall, 1s. 6d.; Winnie Topliss, 5s.; Adah Pollard-Urquhart, 3s. 1d.; Kathleen Parnell, 1s.; Anonymous (Glasgow), 3s.; Doris Longton, 5s.; Jessie H. Anderson, 10s.; Isabel Dobson, 8s.; Emily Pretsell, 1s. 6d.; Maud Armstrong, 2s. 6d.; Phyllis Brissenden, 3s. 9d.; Helen Gillmer, 3s. 6d.; W. Allison Laidlaw, 2s. 6d.; Nora and Mary Smith, 2s.; Margaret Harding, 1s. 6d.; Mrs. M. S. Adamson, 2s. 6d.; Madge Williams, Margery and Mary Webb Williams and friends, £1 7s. 6d.; Winifred Johnston, 2s. 6d.; Dorothy Litten, 4s.; Martha Reid, 1s.; Betty Balfour (Jamaica), 3s.; Dorothy Armstrong, 1s.; Dorothy Jean Best, 10s. 6d.; Eunice Taylor (New Zealand), 5s.; Enid, Nansi, and Myfanwy Felix, 5s.; Kitty Willers, 17s. 2d.; Eileen and Muriel Nelson (Australia), 10s.; Annie Oliver, 5s.; W. Allison Laidlaw, 2s. 6d.; Jean Forbes, 3s.; Edith Penn, 5s.; Elsie Hibberd, 1s. 6d.; Isabel Young, 5s.; Enid and Ida Jones, 10s.

Total amount received		£23 12 10½
Less Lena's Expenses (July 1915 to June 1916)	£13 0 0	
Less Philip's Expenses (June 1 to Nov. 30, 1915	10 10 0	
		23 10 0
Balance		£0 2 10½

IT'S INDIGESTION NOT THE LIVER.

Travelling, visiting, or eating away from home causes CONSTIPATION.
That is not LIVER, it is BOWEL INDIGESTION.

CICFA IS THE ONLY CURE.

YOU HAVE A LIVER. You think it is affected. The chances are 10 to 1 that your Liver itself is perfectly sound, but its action is being upset by frequently dosing it with purgatives, etc., and, as a consequence, your food is not digesting but fermenting and creating gases.

As it is rolled down the Bowel it is formed into little hard dry masses or "Starch Balls" which block the passage, and you have Constipation, also a defective Bile Circulation. Fermentation continues, and acids and impurities from the undigested food are absorbed through the wall of the Bowel into the blood and poured on into the Liver. Though your Liver may be quite healthy it is soon overworked and giving you troublesome symptoms, therefore your symptoms are not due to an affected Liver, but to those acids and impurities which are formed by Indigestion in the Bowel and carried on to the Liver.

Your blood becomes impure, and more acid, affecting your joints and deep muscles, causing Rheumatism, Lumbago, and Sciatica.

It is therefore useless to treat the Rheumatism, the Lumbago, the Sciatica, or the Liver. They are not at fault. The fault lies in the Bowel Indigestion. You must cure that Indigestion.

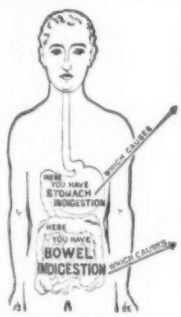
Probably you suffer also from Acid Dyspepsia. Whether you have Acid Dyspepsia or some other form of Stomach Indigestion it should receive immediate attention, because each stage of Digestion affects each succeeding stage, so that the upsetting of digestion in one portion of the tract quickly affects digestion in other portions. Ordinary Indigestion remedies such as Pepsin, Bismuth, Soda, Rhubarb, etc., cannot therefore be expected to cure you, for at best they can only help in local spots, while **any Remedy which can Cure must be able to correct the errors of Digestion wherever they are occurring throughout the whole alimentary tract.**

Cicfa is the only preparation which can do this, and Cicfa has this power because its discoverer succeeded in combining such Digestive Ferments as would ensure perfect digestion at every point along the alimentary tract.

Cicfa therefore cures because it ensures complete digestion of all the Albuminous food in the Stomach and all the Starchy food in the Bowel, corrects the Bile Circulation, prevents fermentation and the formation of "Starch Balls," so that all the nourishment is absorbed into the blood, the refuse is normal, and there can be no Constipation. Cicfa, in fact, contains that perfect combination of Digestive Ferments which Nature requires to ensure this. That's why Cicfa cures.

Cicfa has been taken up by nearly 10,000 British doctors, many of whom have written us of the splendid results secured upon themselves and patients by Cicfa.

IN WAR TIME your mind affects your Digestion more than you realise. You know how worry often affects the Stomach, indeed, the whole alimentary tract. Nausea and even vomiting often result from anxiety. If you are worried at present (who is not worried?) your digestion is weakened, while on the other hand your ability to resist worry is lessened through weak digestion. Keep your Digestion perfect, not by taking Purgatives, which upset it, not by Dieting, with consequent Starvation, which increases the Indigestion, but by eating liberally and regularly and taking Cicfa to perfect digestion, because Cicfa alone contains those natural Digestive Ferments which, when present in sufficient quantity, and in absolute purity, make Indigestion impossible and make Digestion perfect and certain.



GASES in Stomach or Eructations.
Sharp Neuralgic HEADACHES.
ACID in Stomach with Heartburn.
TONGUE coated white all over.
COMPLEXION blotchy, with Redness of Nose, Spots and Pimples.
EATING not desired. Vomiting occasionally.
PAINS darting through Chest and Burning Spot between Shoulder Blades.

GASES in Bowel or Flatulence.
Dull, Heavy HEADACHES.
ACID in the Blood, causing (a) Teeth on Edge, (b) Gout, (c) Rheumatism.
TONGUE coated yellow at back.
COMPLEXION muddy or pasty.
EATING disliked or loathed.
Biliousness and bad taste in mouth.
Pains in Bowel, Griping and Constipation with all its misery.

Cicfa is sold everywhere, price 1s. 1½d., plus 1½d. war tax, and 2s. 9d., plus 3d. war tax.

GET CICFA NOW, OR TEST IT

ABSOLUTELY FREE

Send your Name and Address and **one penny stamp for postage, mention this magazine,** and receive a liberal sample of this wonderful CICFA. Only one sample to each family. No person given a second sample.

CURES INDIGESTION CONSTIPATION CICFA FLATULENCE ACIDITY

CAPSULOIDS (1909), Ltd.,
8a Duke Street, Manchester Square, London, W.

THE QUIVER, DEC., 1915.

STANWORTHS'

"Defiance" REGD UMBRELLAS

This **Umbrella** photographed **before** and **after** repair, is an example of what can be done in our workshops.

A complete wreck in the first picture, the second shows the poor "patient" wrapped in paper on its way per parcel post to be "Stanworthed."

It is difficult to recognise the battered wreck of the first picture in **the smart, neatly-rolled, dainty-looking Umbrella** at foot—repaired and recovered with our famous **'Defiance' Silk Union,** and delivered Post Free, carefully packed in strong cardboard box as shown, at an inclusive charge of

5/-

Send us your Old Umbrella to-day, together with P.O. for 5/-, and it will reach you per return of post, looking as fresh as on the day you first purchased it. Try us with the one you have given up as hopeless.

A post-card will bring you our Illustrated Catalogue of "Defiance" Umbrellas and patterns of materials for re-covering umbrellas from 2/6 upwards.

J. STANWORTH & Co., Northern Umbrella Works, BLACKBURN.





"Used while you sleep."

for Whooping Cough, Spasmodic Croup, Asthma, Sore Throat, Coughs, Bronchitis, Colds, Catarrh.

Don't fail to use Cresolene for the distressing, and often fatal affections for which it is recommended.

It is a simple, safe and effective drugless treatment.

Vaporized Cresolene stops the paroxysms of Whooping Cough and relieves Spasmodic Croup at once.

It is a *boon* to sufferers from asthma.

The air carrying the anti-eptic vapor, inspired with every breath, makes breathing easy, soothes the sore throat, and stops the cough, assuring restful nights.

Cresolene relieves the bronchial complications of Scarlet Fever and Measles, and is a valuable aid in the treatment of Diphtheria.

Cresolene's best recommendation is its 35 years of successful use. Send postcard for Descriptive Booklet to Selling Agents.

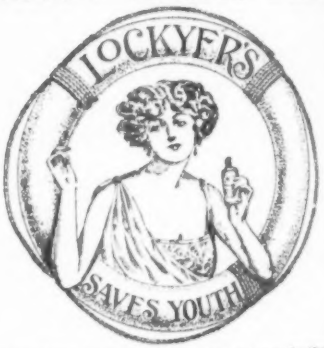
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For Sale by Chemists.

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Advertisements in Provincial Newspapers.

Full particulars as to this class of publicity, by means of a large number of the above, circulating in England, Scotland and Ireland, may be had on application to the Manager, Advertisement Department, CASSELL & COMPANY, Limited, La Belle Sauvage Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.

DON'T LOOK OLD!



But restore your grey and faded hairs to their natural colour with

LOCKYER'S SULPHUR

HAIR RESTORER

Its quality of deepening greyness to the former colour in a few days, thus securing a preserved appearance, has enabled thousands to retain their position.

1/6 **Sold Everywhere.** **1/6**

Lockyer's gives health to the Hair and restores the natural colour. It cleanses the scalp, and makes the most perfect Hair Dressing.

This world-famed Hair Restorer is prepared by the great Hair Specialists, J. PEPPER & Co., LTD., 12 Bedford Laboratories, London, S.E., and can be obtained direct from them by post or from any chemists and stores throughout the world.

In Public Favour!



Fry's PURE BREAKFAST COCOA

CONSUMPTION

OUR present medical authorities say there is no known cure for Consumption at the present day, but they will not condescend to officially test what has been proved to be this long sought for commodity, though sixty thousand souls, mostly the cream of the rising generation, are sacrificed each year to this disease, whilst a remedy which would eradicate it is ignored by the authorities. Here is an instance:—

Mr. George Sabin, who lived at 63 Bestwood Road, Hucknall Torkard, Notts, in January, 1912, was suffering from Consumption, had been unable to work since the previous May, used to bring up a lot of expectoration. The trouble had also extended to the throat, and, generally speaking, was in a hopeless condition as far as orthodox medicine was concerned. In that month, January, he commenced with Stevens' treatment, with the result that he was granted a new lease of life; not only that, but he is now on

ACTIVE SERVICE

with the British Expeditionary Force in France. He enlisted when war was declared, went out to France in the first week of January, was in the commencement of the charge of Neuve Chapelle, was in the great fight on the 9th and 10th May, and about a week ago was still enjoying the very best of health. At the present time everyone reading this notice will trust that he is still quite well. Full particulars of the remedy which has granted Mr. Sabin a new lease of life, and enabled him to serve his King and Country, with detailed records of a large number of other cases, will be gladly sent free of charge to anyone requesting same; moreover, if you are suffering yourself and are not in the very last stages of the disease, you may have an undertaking to completely cure you to the satisfaction of your own doctor before you need pay a single penny. Only address: Chas. H. Stevens, 204 and 206 Worple Road, Wimbledon, London.

RONUK makes furniture look just like new!

Sold everywhere.
In tins, 3d., 6d., 1s. & 2s.
RONUK, LIMITED,
Portslade, Brighton, Sussex.

Should Store or Chemist offer you other preparations instead of these, it is an insult to your intelligence and done for extra profit.

GET WELL AND KEEP FIT

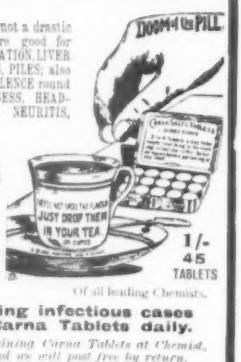
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(Tasteless)

THE TIMELY USE OF THESE TABLETS HAS PREVENTED THOUSANDS OF SERIOUS ILLNESSES.

THEY are a puritive, not a drastic purgative, and are good for INDIGESTION, CONSTIPATION, LIVER and KIDNEY TROUBLES, PILES; also for GIDDINESS, FLATULENCE round the heart, NERVOUSNESS, HEADACHE, RHEUMATISM, NEURITIS, and GOUT.



Directly a COLD appears a course should be taken.

They give you a bright, buoyant feeling.

1/- 45 TABLETS

Of all leading Chemists.

Nurses attending infectious cases should take Carna Tablets daily.

If any difficulty in obtaining Carna Tablets at Chemist, send crossed P.O., and we will post free by return.

THE CARNA MANUFACTURING CO., Ld., 110 STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

TELL EVERYBODY. GIVEN AWAY ON PRINCIPLE!
Send at once to Secure a Copy.

Classy Coloured Plate — PRESENTED FREE — ANGELS AT MONS — WORTH 2d

CLEARANCE SALE

KHAKI FRIENDS

Grand BOX 20 CLASSICAL CHRISTMAS CARDS.

26 Box for 13 Post Free. Assorted. | HALF PRICE With Envelopes post free. | 26 Box for 13 Post Free. Assorted.

BIG BARGAIN BUNDLE. Orders taken in Rotation. 20 Lovely Leaflet'ed Xmas Cards and Post Cards for 2d. Including works of Rich Art worth 6d. and 1s. each. With the Bargain Bundle comes the Coloured Plate, or if cleared, a box of the Autograph Stationery.

AMONG THE CLASSICS.

DON'T FORGET THE BOYS IN BLUE. Beautiful Autograph Xmas Stationery, complete in Box, 9½d., post free. With Envelopes.

Full Sample Sets of the above will be sent post free for 9d.

SECURE NOW.

T.B.L., King's Premises, Savoy Street, STRAND, LONDON.

THE SWEETNESS OF PERPETUAL YOUTH



If you wish a Lovely Skin, free from Spot and Wrinkle, Massage the Face, Hands, and Arms with M. F. T. SOCIETY SKIN FOOD COMPLEXION WAX. Yes, this Every-Weather Treasure corrects extremes of Sun, Wind, Fog, Frost, etc. Refines away Wrinkles or other traces of Work, Worry and Years. 2/2 and 4/9, post free. It prevents Hairs growing on Face.

COMFORT FOR BEAUTY FEET

THOMPSON'S MAGIC CORN PLASTER

Quickly cures Corns, Bunions, and Swollen Joints, and restores the foot to their natural beauty. Large Sheet, post free, 1/3. Only from

M. F. THOMPSON, "Homo" Pharmacy,
17 GORDON STREET, GLASGOW.

Catarrh of Digestive Organs

The soothing, healing, and tonic properties of Angier's Emulsion eminently adapt it to the relief and cure of stomach and bowel disorders of a catarrhal, fermentative, ulcerative, or tubercular nature. Simple and harmless, this remedy exercises its soothing, lubricating effects throughout the entire alimentary tract. It arrests fermentation, checks bacterial growth, and promotes normal healthy action of the bowels. Angier's Emulsion is a most efficacious remedy in a wide variety of disorders such as gastric or intestinal catarrh, gastric ulcer, mucous colitis, chronic indigestion, nervous dyspepsia, chronic constipation, etc. It has proved its value in many obscure and obstinate cases.

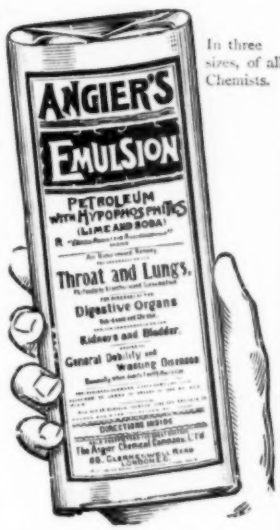
ANGIER'S EMULSION

"ADVISED BY A DOCTOR"

40 Kentish Road, Handsworth,
Birmingham.

Dear Sirs,—It is now about five years since Angier's Emulsion was recommended to me by a doctor, and I have found it invaluable for indigestion and catarrh as well as for toning up the system. I was very much run down when I first took it, but improved immediately, and gained in weight 15 lb. in twelve weeks. I have recommended the Emulsion to several of my friends for various complaints, with good results. It proved especially good for a friend who suffers from inflammation of the bowels, who was completely cured and has been at work regularly ever since.

(Signed) F. THOMPSON.



In three sizes, of all Chemists.

Free Sample Coupon.

Name.....

Address .....

Quiver CG Fill in Coupon and send with 4d. postage to the

ANGIER CHEMICAL CO., Ltd., 36 Clerkenwell Road, London, E.C.



The Perfect Food Dainty

Laitova Lemon Cheese

The daily spread for the children's bread.

is a food in itself. It contains the necessary constituents for building up the tissues, and supplying energy to the growing youngsters.

And it saves the butter bill!

NICER THAN BUTTER
Ask the Children.

CHEAPER THAN BUTTER
Ask the Grocer.



Laitova is now packed in new dainty hygienic jars, dust and damp proof, which retain to the full its rich, delicious flavour.

In 7d. and smaller sizes, of grocers and stores everywhere.

SUTCLIFFE & BINGHAM, Ltd., Cornbrook, MANCHESTER.

O90

IN THE SHOPS THIS CHRISTMAS

To enjoy the festive season to the full, one must feel warm and invigorated within to battle successfully against the cold rain and fog of the winter months. FRY'S COCOA, as a breakfast beverage, cannot be beaten as a pure, healthful, strength-giving drink to start the day on. It enables one to take some of the cheery warmth of the home out into the draughty train or 'bus, and as a stay it is second to none. FRY'S COCOA is one of the choicest items on Nature's menu, and the extremely low price of this cocoa brings it within the reach of all. FRY'S COCOA is a veteran among cocoas, and it is still where it was in the beginning—at the head of all! There are no coupons, but *full value* in the cocoa. The War Budget demands economy. What could be better than a twofold economy in the home—a saving of money and of health, and hence of doctor's bills! FRY'S Pure Breakfast COCOA ensures such an Economy. Try it, appreciate it, and stick by it! A Christmas gift of FRY'S CHOCOLATES is well worth giving, and the recipient is delighted with the purity and excellence of the famous chocolates. In the theatre and in the home they are welcomed by your friends, and the name and excellence of FRY'S CHOCOLATES makes them a valued gift. FRY'S COCOA and CHOCOLATES are procurable everywhere.

* * * * *

Cold feet are always unpleasant; but woollen hose keeps the damp cold air away—that is, unadulterated wool does. Nowadays large consignments of adulterated wool—which chiefly becomes unbranded Hosiery—is flooding the British markets. Stockings or socks *all wool* are hard to find in these times, but "JASON" Hosiery is the same as ever. It is *guaranteed all wool*, and therefore has a world-wide reputation. "JASON" unshrinkable all-wool hosiery is recognisable by the Jason Tab on every pair of stockings and socks; the Jason Tab represents years of goodwill—it stands for the very best craftsmanship and experience, and means that "JASON" hosiery is the finest, silkiest, and most perfectly woven thing on the market. The JASON HOSIERY CO., Leicester, manufacture many new styles, plain and fancy, for ladies, children and men. It is no economy to buy shoddy, inferior goods, and "JASON" stands for quality.

* * * * *

Your favourite arm-chair wants re-covering, and yet you hesitate to lay out the money on such expenditure in these days of straitened circumstances and rigid economy. REXINE, for the covering of furniture, has no equal. It entirely supersedes leather for many reasons—i.e. its appearance is equally as good as leather, it wears better, nothing can scratch it, and it is stain- and grease-proof, and when soiled can be washed. And it costs *only one quarter the price* of leather. Appearance, durability and cheapness—that is REXINE—the Perfect Upholstering Material. Why suffer the misery of seeing shabby furniture about when such a covering as REXINE is available at such a low sum? Your furniture dealer will show you samples. In case he cannot, write to THE BRITISH LEATHER CLOTH MANUFACTURING CO., LIMITED, Hyde, near Manchester.

Zeppelin "nerves" spoil the night's rest nowadays, but one certain way to combat sleeplessness is to lie upon the luxurious NESTA Spring Mattress. To lie awake upon a NESTA spring mattress is next to impossible. Each mattress is made on a patented principle. There are over 1,000 springs in the "X" quality mattress; that is why comfort and the NESTA spring mattress go hand in hand. The "springiness" remains in the mattress for ever, and it is so constructed that no spring can get out of its position. The NESTA spring mattress lasts a lifetime. It is made in six qualities and all sizes, and any house furnisher can supply it. There is nothing cheap about it except the price. Write to NESTA, LIMITED (Dept. 1), 60 Silver Street, Edmonton, London, N., for illustrated catalogue.

* * * * *

"A magnificent All-British Collection"—that describes in a nutshell RAPHAEL TUCK & SONS', LIMITED, novelties for this Christmas. Xmas and New Year Cards, Auto Stationery, Post Cards, Gift Books, Toy and Painting Books, Calendars, Pictures, "Zag-Zaw" Picture Puzzles, Art Novelties—all these beautiful and well-made Xmas goods have been produced by British Capital and Labour. An ideal Gift is a TUCK'S "Zag-Zaw" Picture Puzzle; it pleases everyone, and makes the dark days pass quickly. What about the wounded in hospital?—it is just the thing for them! But be sure it's a "TUCK'S" Zag-Zaw, the *original* British-made Picture Puzzle.

* * * * *

MURRAY'S "Mellow" Mixture is a Tobacco one can smoke all day and never tire of. "Mellow" describes the subtle charm of this delightful blend of Tobacco. Those smokers who are looking for a really good Virginia Cigarette at a moderate price will be well advised to give MURRAY'S "Polo" Cigarettes a trial, for their quality and flavour are in harmony with the well-known reputation of this old-established firm. "Polo" are a mild blend, with a delightful aroma that gains the instant appreciation of all good judges of Tobacco. At home or in the trenches MURRAY'S "Mellow" Mixture will be appreciated at its full value. It is a gift from the gods, and its price places it within the reach of all.

* * * * *

There are puddings, and puddings! But the Christmas pudding containing BORWICK'S BAKING POWDER is easily top of the tree of perfection. The recipe for BORWICK'S Christmas pudding is as follows: *Ingredients*—¾ lb. Flour, 2 large teaspoonfuls heaped-up of BORWICK'S BAKING POWDER, 4 ozs. Breadcrumbs, 1 lb. Suet, 2 lb. Raisins, 1 lb. Currants, ¾ pint Milk, 6 Eggs, 10 ozs. Sugar, 2 ozs. Almonds, ½ lb. Mixed Peel, Rind and Juice of 2 Lemons. *Preparation*—Clean and prepare fruit, etc. Chop suet finely, also candied peel. Mix all ingredients together, and bind with 6 eggs and ¾ pint of milk. Turn into greased basins, tie over, and steam for 8 hours. The result is delightful, and the family will appreciate the Christmas pudding that contains BORWICK'S Baking Powder. Cakes, pastry, puddings and pies all need BORWICK'S BAKING POWDER to make them perfect.

IN THE SHOPS THIS CHRISTMAS

A REALLY suitable present for relative or friend in the trenches at this Christmas will perhaps offer some difficulty to the giver; but why not call at J. W. BENSON'S, LIMITED, 62 and 64 Ludgate Hill, E.C., and 25 Old Bond Street, W., and see their "Active Service" Wristlet Watches? The *Luminous Dial* and *Hands* enable the wearer to see the time on the darkest of nights, and, what is more, an "Active Service" wrist watch keeps correct time—an all-important factor in modern warfare. No officer's equipment is complete without such a watch. Hundreds of wearers, home on leave, have testified to the excellent time-keeping qualities and great service the "Active Service" Watches have been to them. J. W. BENSON, LIMITED, have gold bracelet watches in several designs, all warranted timekeepers of the utmost precision. Such a gift is both a valuable and useful thing to any lady. Illustrated list "B" will be sent on receipt of a post card, showing many designs of bracelet watches. Military and Naval Badge Brooches, artistically carved, chased, and enamelled, are one of BENSON'S specialities, and make splendid presents. Sketch of any badge, with or without gems, submitted free of charge. The vast selection of Jewellery of all descriptions, Watches, Chains, Plate, etc., to be seen at J. W. BENSON'S establishments makes the selection of Christmas presents an easy matter. Call and see them, or write for required book, and have goods sent home on approval at BENSON'S risk and expense. BENSON'S have just published a New Series of Books, fully illustrated, and dealing exhaustively with their various classes of Jewellery, Watches, Silver, etc. A—Watches and Chains. B—Bracelet and Wristlet Watches. C—Rings. D—Jewellery of all other kinds. E—Inexpensive Silver articles for presents, and Fitted Travelling Cases. Also a large book of Sterling Silver and "Empire Plate" articles for the House, and every variety of Clock. Sent post free on application. The economical "Times" System of Monthly Payments is available—a most convenient method of purchasing Christmas and other presents. Selections sent on approval at BENSON'S Risk and Expense.

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To defy the rigours of winter one must keep the damp away. Doctors advise the wearing of Boots, in consideration of health, as best for defeating the inclement weather of the wintry months. The DIPLOMA and MASCOT Boots and Shoes, made by the makers of the exclusive NORVIC Shoe, are manufactured by skilled workers from similar designs as the Norvic Shoe, and from materials chosen with the same care and experience. Apart from considerations of health, Boots are more economical than Shoes for Autumn and Winter wear. It is perhaps a little difficult to say why this should be so. No doubt one reason is that DIPLOMA and MASCOT Winter Boots are made a little stouter than Shoes and Summer Boots, without any appreciable sacrifice of style and flexibility. Whatever the reason, there is no question of the economy of Boots, and your own experience will prove it. Economy is judicious management, as every woman knows. To buy cheaper goods than one has been in the habit of doing is poor management, and usually to buy dear in the long run. This is particularly the case with Boots and Shoes. One must pay a fair price to get the satisfaction of long wear, dainty styles, and good repairable footwear. It is judicious management, the truest economy, to buy "Mascot" Boots and Shoes, for in spite of War conditions, which have sadly depleted the stocks of good leathers, the makers have steadily refused to tamper with Mascot Quality. *They are the same splendid wearing shoes they were before the War.* You will get the same satisfaction out of them, and by taking a little more care, and having them repaired twice where before you only had them repaired once, you will be economising far more successfully than by purchasing inferior quality Shoes. Mascot Shoes will repair, and repair well, again and again, and they will not lose their shape in wear or *repair*. If you have never worn them before, you will say, after trying them, there is nothing better than Mascot. The huge sales of "Mascot" prove it. Last season they could not be made fast enough, representing, as they do, the most reliable footwear at moderate prices ever offered. To be sure of satisfaction, ask to see DIPLOMA and MASCOT Shoes.

* * * * *

"How to Double Boot Life" is a subject that interests everyone. WM. WALKER & SONS, LIMITED, DRI-PED Advt. Dept., County Buildings, Cannon Street, Manchester, will forward their booklet anywhere. The subject is interesting, and must so, because it is *true!* The life of a pair of boots *can* be doubled, and DRI-PED Sole Leather is the means of doubling it. The price of DRI-PED has not increased as much as that of ordinary leather; so that it is more than ever advisable to secure *double wear* by ordering DRI-PED instead of ordinary leather for re-soling and for the soles of new boots. Order the double-wearing, wet-resisting DRI-PED for every type of footwear for men, women and children. Supplied by repairers and new boot dealers everywhere. The Diamond Trade Mark in purple is on each sole; without it the leather is a substitute.

* * * * *

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* * * * *

When sending a parcel to the front this Christmas why not enclose a tin of MACKINTOSH'S TOFFEE? It is appreciated hugely by all. All confectioners sell it—in 4 lb. tins 5s., or 1s. 4d. per lb. loose.


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